Week ending September 3 1949 Every Thursday Threepence

John Bull

Ten Years After:
LIDDELL HART ON HOW WE BLUNDERED INTO WAR

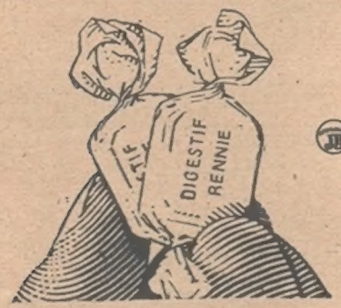
Stomach pain
gets you down . . .

and cuts out all the pleasure in your meals. You can't feel really well when you dread that dull, griping ache that comes after eating—the pain that is caused by excess acid in your stomach.

Rennies are a swift, sure relief. Two tablets sucked slowly, one after another, following your meal, neutralize this harmful acid *naturally*, drip-by-drip. With Rennies there's no danger of the over-alkalization that provokes further acid.

If they *don't* relieve that stomach trouble, it's time you saw your doctor.

Carry handily-wrapped Rennies everywhere you go, ready to take at the first hint of pain. From all chemists—25 for 9d., 50 for 1/5, or, in the large economy size, 100 for 2/8 (all prices include tax).



DIGESTIF **RENNIES**
for happy stomachs

EXCAVATION IN PROGRESS

Excavating for the foundations of one of Britain's 38 new Power Stations. The work involved may equal that of digging a 40 ft deep hole the size of a football field.

more power
AND WHAT IT MEANS

BEFORE the foundations of a modern power station can be laid, there is a gigantic task of excavation. Owing to the weight and nature of the generating plant, these foundations must be more extensive than those of almost any other building. In one case 160,000 tons of concrete have been used.

In 4 years British Electricity will build 38 new power stations, and will install new plant in 43 existing stations. 40% more power in 4 years is the target.

BRITISH ELECTRICITY

YOU'LL LOVE ITS FRUITY

FLAVOUR OK

'O.K' SAUCE

IS 44% FRUIT

Xmarks the spot where the spot USED TO BE*

*It was quickly cleared by D.D.D.

You, too, can have a clear youthful complexion free from spots and pimples. Try this amazing non-greasy liquid remedy and keep your skin smooth and beautiful. Get a 1/7d. bottle from your chemist today.

D.D.D. Prescription
Look for the 3 D's

THE GENERAL PURPOSE ANTISEPTIC

G.P. Antiseptic and Germicide should be in every home where good health is treasured.
G.P. is non-poisonous, non-irritating and non-staining, and is pleasant in use.
G.P. can be used as a lotion for wounds, an antiseptic and deodorising spray, a sanitary disinfectant, a mouth wash, and for personal hygiene.
G.P. is obtainable from your Chemist: 4 oz. 1/3d. 8 oz. 2/-.

Manufactured by
CUXSON, GERRARD & CO., LTD.
Manufacturing Chemists, Oldbury, Birmingham.

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20 Years' Solid Service

Maximum Light, Correct Ventilation
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10 ft.	8 ft.	8 ft.	£37.16
12 ft.	8 ft.	8 ft.	£41. 5

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1849 *The Spirit of a Century* 1949

"Walters' Palm" TOFFEE

THE PERFECTION of CONFECTIONS

Stop Cracks

KNOTHOLES, PINHOLES, SHAKES, AND DENTS IN WOOD AND FURNITURE

"BRUMMER" fills like magic all cracks, crevices, splits and pinholes in furniture, floors, doors and woodwork. Sets firmly into bare wood, nail heads, screws, glass and iron. Heatproof. Will not sink. Used extensively by craftsmen in all wood industries. Indispensable in home, workshop and factory whenever a perfect wood stopper is required. Ideal for model making, holes and splits in dance floors, and cracks in ceilings. White, cream, oak, walnut, black, mahogany, etc.

2 lb. TIN 2/6

CAN'T SHRINK OR SINK WHEN DRY

BRUMMER
THE *Master* STOPPING FOR ALL WOODWORK ETC.

From all Ironmongers and Hardware Stores, or send 2/6 for a 2 lb. tin, post free from BRUMMER LTD., (Dept. L), Chapel Avenue, ADDLESTONE, SURREY. (State colour required.)

EDITORIAL

Stop this deadly drain on our woods

IF YOU HAVE BEEN in the country during the holiday season, think of the woods you walked in. How many of them contained a solid stand of well-grown trees? How many were a mixture of tangled young growth, rotten and misshapen old trees, and stumps of newly-felled ones?

There are far too many of the second kind all over Britain today. That's why we have a serious shortage of good trees. The Government is worried about it. So is everyone else responsible for our timber supplies.

Although its evil effects are only now being felt, the shortage began many years ago.

For more than a hundred years Britain has had less woodland than almost any other European country, in proportion to her size. Our landscape always looks well-wooded, but this is mainly because of the innumerable small trees in the hedgerows. These hardly count for timber production.

It is the big woods, tended by skilled foresters, cut sparingly and scientifically, replanted as they are felled, and kept clear of useless undergrowth, that really matter. Valuable forests don't "happen"—they must be farmed just like fields, if they are to grow good crops of wood.

The wealthy Britain of fifty years ago didn't bother about this. Her forests and parks were game preserves and pleasure places rather than timber farms. Cheap timber poured in from the enormous forests of America and Scandinavia.

OUR mines and railways, the growing paper industry and the building trade came to depend more and more on imported wood. Meanwhile our native oaks were felled for furniture making and seldom replanted. And the spread of towns ate into what woods remained.

We felt the pinch for the first time in the first World War, when the German submarines nearly succeeded in blockading us. Then began a furious felling of trees.

By 1918 such inroads had been made into our few little forests that the Government had become alarmed.

This led to the setting up of the Forestry Commission, whose job was to buy land, plant it with trees—mostly softwoods for the mines and railways—and tend them with its trained staff. The Commission did, and still does, a good job, as far as its money allows. When it was set up, it embodied overdue recognition of the fact that trees are a slow-growing crop which must be planned and planted perhaps half a man's lifetime ahead of the harvest. Even softwood trees must grow from twenty to thirty years before they are useful in industry.

Unfortunately the second World War came before new plantations were ready on a large scale. Again the supply of foreign timber dwindled. The home forests were attacked once more—this time on a big scale, with tractors, bulldozers and regiments of imported lumberjacks.

So most of the best timber which escaped the first war came down in the second. And because the last war ended with Britain almost ruined, we have gone on cutting our trees ever since, instead of buying all the foreign timber we needed.

WITH an eye to the future, the present Government announced a ten-year target of five million acres of forest. It worked out a scheme to help private landlords, who still own most of the woods, to replenish and look after their trees. They were to be paid ten pounds an acre towards the cost of planting, and 3s. 4d. an acre a year towards maintenance, if they would "dedicate" their woods. (Dedication in this sense means promising to cultivate them properly, under skilled official supervision.)

A million acres need replanting, and another million and a quarter can be made fully productive.

But landowners have not so far responded to the dedication scheme. The pitiful total of eleven thousand acres only had been dedicated by last May, and a mere 14,000 acres more were on the legal way to dedication.

That's not how to guard against the possibility of another war finding us without enough useful timber to carry on for more than eighteen months—let alone provide for the purposes of peace.

The Government is now therefore raising its bid to landowners. They are to get twelve pounds an acre instead of ten, and 4s. maintenance instead of 3s. 4d.

Unluckily, most landowners feel themselves so impoverished by taxation, and feel so little financial security, that they are not interested in planning a tree crop which will give no return for many years.

So it is likely that the Forestry Commission will have to acquire further vast areas of unproductive woods in order to rescue them from neglect.

The drain on our woods is certain to increase rather than diminish. It is already running far ahead of all schemes for replacement. Really drastic and determined measures are now necessary to provide against a steadily worsening shortage of timber.

WE LEARNT A LESSON FROM LACK OF SOAP

Housewives had to take whatever they could get—*now they KNOW what washes whitest*

MORE THAN HALF NOW PLUMP FOR PERSIL!

MILLIONS of women now know what millions of other women knew before — but it took soap-rationing to make them discover it!

Some used to think all that talk about Persil washing whiter was just advertising. Then came soap-rationing. They had to take what their shopkeeper had. Sometimes one thing, sometimes another. Sometimes Persil. They used each one in turn.

And *were* they delighted! It was true: Persil *did* wash whiter. They could see it with their own eyes and seeing is believing!

TOOK THEIR CUE FROM QUEUEING

The long years of shortages have had one good result. Because women had to take any kind of soap available, they learnt beyond all doubt that Persil washes whiter!

This Persil advertisement appeared in 1939. Even then millions of women knew it told the truth—that Persil washes whiter. And now *new* millions have been forced to learn that Persil washes whiter—by having to try everything in turn. After all, experience is the best teacher!

7 million British women can't be wrong!

A nation-wide survey, just completed, indicates that more than half the housewives in Great Britain now prefer Persil for whiteness.*

This means Persil now has over 7,000,000 fans! Such overwhelming preference for a soap powder is really amazing.

The simple truth is that Persil washes whites sparkling white as nothing else can. Safe but sure, Persil's millions of tiny oxygen bubbles carry away the dirt that makes clothes so grey. And Persil forms no scum, even in hard water.

Getting your share of Persil

Even though there is more Persil about, the demand is still far ahead of supply. Do continue to ask for Persil but, if you're unlucky, please be patient. Your shopkeeper will go on doing his best to get Persil for you.

*7 million women now say

PERSIL WASHES WHITER!

PRS 1168-201

JOHN BULL 189 HIGH HOLBORN LONDON W.C.1

SEPTEMBER 3, 1949 VOLUME 86 NUMBER 2253 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

The finest cream comes from Devon

...but the finest comes from SUTTONS

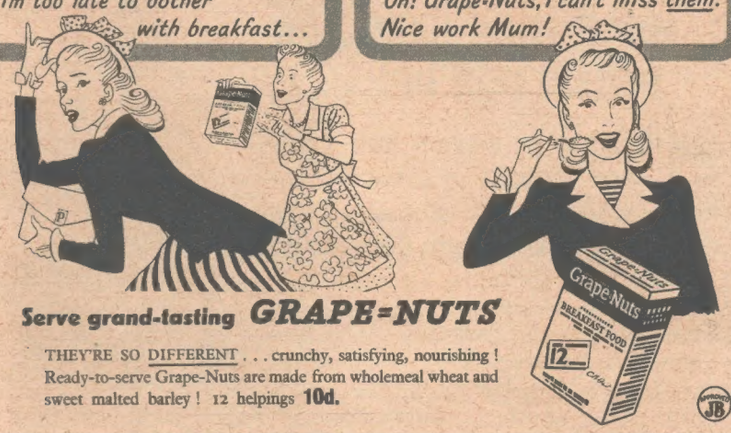
FRUIT SQUASH

3/- PER BOTTLE

Makers of "Master Touch" Sauce, Fine Pickles, Canned Goods and "The Cream of Salad Creams"

I'm too late to bother with breakfast...

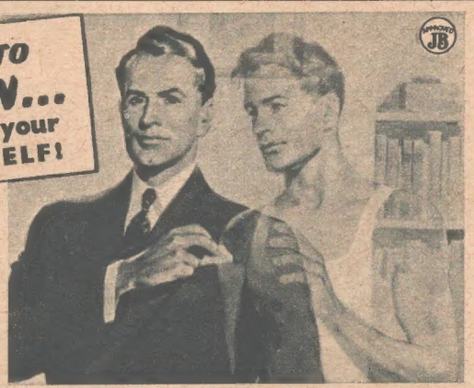
Oh! Grape-Nuts, I can't miss them. Nice work Mum!



Serve grand-tasting GRAPE-NUTS

THEY'RE SO DIFFERENT . . . crunchy, satisfying, nourishing! Ready-to-serve Grape-Nuts are made from wholemeal wheat and sweet malted barley! 12 helpings 10d.

IT ISN'T ENOUGH TO LOOK CLEAN... free your pores of your WORK-WEARY SELF!



★ MORE LIFEBUOY TOILET SOAP IS COMING INTO THE SHOPS! ASK NOW TO BE SURE OF GETTING IT REGULARLY.

LIFEBUOY Toilet Soap makes you FRESH IN EVERY PORE

LBT 689B-1160 A LEVER PRODUCT

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Free Speech

THE WAY TO BETTER HOTELS?

MAY I, AS A SWISS who studied in England for five years, express an opinion on your editorial, "Taking Care Of Our Visitors" (JOHN BULL, July 30)? If the quality of British catering is to be improved, the first thing is to attend to the professional education of kitchen, serving and clerical employees.

Most Swiss hotel workers have never seen the inside of an hotel school but it is their experience and skill which gives Swiss hotels their reputation. The secret is the system of apprenticeship, under which parents pay a lump sum to an hotel keeper who undertakes to teach the youngster his trade.

On top of that, the boy must attend evening classes, sometimes as often as three times a week.

The apprenticeship lasts three to four years. At the end, the boy must pass a final examination to earn his diploma. It is practically impossible to get a job in a Swiss hotel if you cannot show a diploma and a written reference.

The organizations which protect the apprentices and the Swiss hotel industry as a whole are subsidized by the State, which appreciates the value of a well-organized tourist trade.—HANS BOCK, Mirabeau Hotel, Lausanne-Ouchy.

A Screwsman On Narks

WHILE AWAITING TRIAL in Brixton Prison on a screwing charge, I read an article in your magazine by a self-confessed nark ("The Burglar From Scotland Yard," JOHN BULL, May 21). I have not been able to write sooner, but I can think of nothing more despicable than a person such as your correspondent, who is himself a screwsman, putting the black on his accomplice.

Every screwsman is of necessity a fatalist and knows that when he does a job he sets himself up against the police. He takes that risk as part of the price. But he does not accept narks.—J. B., London, N.1.

Glossary: Screwing charge—burglary charge; nark—police informer; screwsman—burglar.

As Others Hear Us

BY CUPPING THE HANDS around the ears and pressing them slightly forward, it is quite possible to hear ourselves as others hear us. The result is often startling.—SIDNEY H. YOUNG, 17 Roseberry Park, Redfield, Bristol.

Evidence Can Lie

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE can seem very conclusive but be wrong all the same. Recently I fell out with a fellow workman. We did not come to blows, but several people heard us uttering threats to one another. After a loud battle of words behind a machine, where we could be heard but not easily seen, I was knocked out by a heavy blow on the side of the head. When I recovered, one of those attending me was the man with whom I had been quarrelling.

It seems that he had gone to his own machine about thirty feet away. A boy had to take to him a heavy, six-foot metal bar used on the job. Swinging the bar on to his shoulder, the boy accidentally knocked me out. He did not know that he had done so, and carried the bar to the man.

If the blow had proved fatal, that man would have been found with a piece of metal that had my hairs sticking to it. And everyone in the workshop knew that we had been quarrelling. — GILBERT WARRINGTON, 7 Springfield Terrace, Hayfield, near Stockport, Cheshire.

From Behind The Counter

AS A CANTEEN COOK, may I offer an opinion from our side of the counter on the dirty food controversy? We see workers who come and take food with dirty hands, although washing facilities are available. Cigarette ash is spilled over the plates, cups and saucers, and girls think nothing of combing their hair over the tables. We do not smoke in the kitchen, but that does not prevent the customers from blowing smoke in our faces and over the food on the counter. Not all the brickbats should be thrown at us.—COOK, Norwich.

Selfishness In Trains

DURING A TRAIN JOURNEY from Glasgow recently, I experienced real selfishness. It was a busy train and most compartments were of the type with arm rests which in normal times hold three a side but which can hold four. I went into one which already had six people in it and asked if I might have a seat. Two women, who had corner seats, curtly informed me that there was only room for six and that the arms would not be raised until an official gave orders.

I took no notice and sat down. Soon after an official came along and ordered all arm rests to be lifted. Surely we don't have to wait to be told to be courteous.—MRS. A. C., Glasgow.

Better Off Indoors

THE CLERK FROM DEVON who says he is considering taking a manual job ("Free Speech," July 30) should think again. I was a dock porter until I got my present office job. I had to do a lot of distasteful work, battling with hail, rain and snow. My salary now does not compare with my previous overtime-inflated earnings, but in mind and body I am much better off. —SHIPPING CLERK, Liverpool.

Removing The Stain

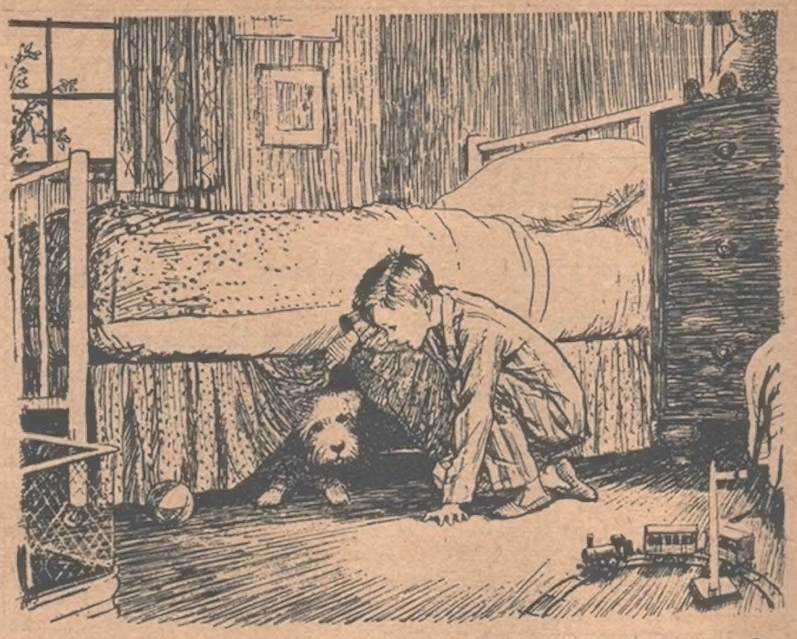
OVER AN EMBROIDERED white cloth I clumsily spilled a dish of stewed black cherries. Trying quickly to think of all the cleaning methods I knew, I soaked it in cold water. There was no result. Only a deep purple patch remained. I added salt. Still no result. I rubbed a lemon on the stain but all that happened was that it turned red.

I sprinkled a thick layer of salt over the cloth but there was no change, except for a slight alteration in tint. Despairing, I finally poured a kettle of boiling water on it and in a few minutes the stain had disappeared and the cloth was as good as new. I still don't know which combination of methods did the trick.—MRS. B. BURTON, 163a Broad Street, Birmingham, 15.

John Bull welcomes readers' views, experiences and ideas for publication. A guinea is paid for every letter used. Mark the envelope "Free Speech" and make sure your full name and address is in the letter

Fortune makes the heart grow fonder

On the right are: Mallow and Delight, Coffee Cream, and Nut Whirl—three of the exciting chocolates you'll meet in this delicious Fortune assortment made by **CALEY** OF NORWICH



"No use hiding, Smoky, it's bedtime!"

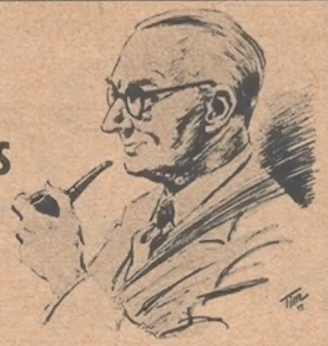
David himself is usually the culprit, hiding just when mother is calling that fateful "Bedtime!" Now Smoky follows in his young master's wayward footsteps!

But mother is right. She knows that children burn up energy far faster than grown-ups do. This energy *must* be replaced, or children soon get overtired and strained. They need plenty of sound, restful sleep. And this is where Horlicks is so valuable.

Horlicks nourishes the tired system, soothes tense nerves, helps to build up fresh reserves of energy during a night of restful sleep.

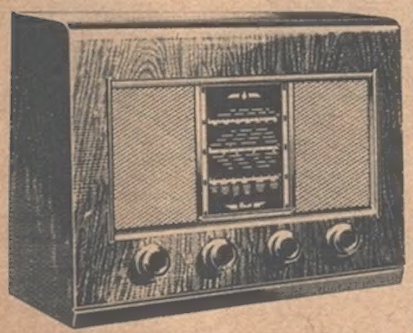
HORLICKS

CHRISTOPHER STONE SAYS



..take your dealer's word for it

Bush dealers have a well-earned reputation for reliability and service, like the Bush sets they sell. You'll find your own Bush dealer very enthusiastic about this latest table model, the AC.11, and not without reason, because at the price, this set, built to Bush standards, represents capital value. I've been putting it through its paces and I think it's a capital investment as well. Hear it at your Bush dealer's.



BUSH MODEL AC.11, a five valve A.C. superhet receiver with 3-waveband switch including gram-position. Type DAC.11 for D.C. or A.C. mains. Tax paid **£21-10-0**

BUSH RADIO

Call at your Bush dealer or write for his address and folder to:—

BUSH RADIO LIMITED, DEPARTMENT J.B., POWER ROAD, CHISWICK, LONDON, W.4

royds 49/19/9

WISK is wonderful it does the Big Wash!

With Wisk, you can see the dirt roll out!

No greasy scum round the washtub when you use Wisk

Wisk kills grease. Plates and dishes come out sparkling!

HAVE YOU TRIED IT YET—Lever Brothers' amazing coupon-free powder, Wisk, that is specially made to do the whole family wash?

Wisk does the fine things, of course, and brings them up like new. But Wisk does *more*. It does all the heavy, dirty things like sheets, shirts, overalls, towels, children's things. And gets them brilliantly clean.

You get lots of lather with Wisk. The more you whip it up, the more it lathers. And Wisk forms no hard-water scum. Use Wisk just as you would a soap powder. But don't mix it with soap, soap powder, or flakes. Wisk and soap don't work well together.

Available in England and Wales

WISK does so much MORE!

A *LEVER* PRODUCT

WS 10-828

"NO CLERKS . . . no Air Force!"

Without its clerical staff the complex organisation of the Royal Air Force, at home and overseas, would break down. No wonder clerks have been known to boast that "the pen is mightier than the jet." That is why, when you become an R.A.F. clerk, you begin a career that really leads somewhere. It can take you far in the Service—as organiser and administrator. It fits you for a highly responsible post in civilian life afterwards. It is one of many worthwhile careers open to young men (17½ to 33) who join the R.A.F. for five to twelve years. Send the coupon for information (without obligation)—now.

Learn your trade in the

ROYAL AIR FORCE

and be trained for life!

TO:—AIR MINISTRY, DEPT. JB30X, VICTORY HOUSE, KINGSWAY, LONDON, W.C.2
Please send full details of R.A.F. careers (open envelope—1d stamp)

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EX-AIRMEN SHOULD ASK FOR DETAILS OF £125 BOUNTY SCHEME

Does your tongue feel ACID FUR on your teeth?

Run your tongue round your teeth . . . notice a rough woolly feeling? That's acid fur threatening your teeth. To correct acid many dentists advise 'Milk of Magnesia'* contained only in one toothpaste — Phillips' Dental Magnesia. Try Phillips' today. Notice how clean your teeth feel—such a nice taste left in the mouth. You'll soon be proud of your 'magnesia smile'.

Phillips' DENTAL MAGNESIA **Toothpaste**

1/4 *per tube—Extra large* 2/3

* *'Milk of Magnesia' is the trade mark of Phillips' preparation of magnesia.*

SULLEN SUE BECOMES

A "REGULAR" SUNBEAM

Long ago we gave up saying "good morning" to Sullen Sue for fear she'd bite our heads off. Then this happened: Sue sails in on a certain Wednesday morning with a glittering smile you'd pay to see.

"*Inherited something?*" *I cracked.*

"Priceless treasure," she retorted. "Give ear and I'll tell you. Goes by the name of Kellogg's All-Bran—the best thing in the world for moving road blocks on one's inner highway (there's 30 feet of it, don't forget). All the soft food we eat these days gets so easily absorbed, it doesn't have the *bulk* to keep traffic humming. Nothing for those interior muscles to take hold of."

"*But All-Bran has?*"

"Has indeed—plus deliciousness."

"*Turning you into a sunshine girl is a real recommendation, I must say.*"

Sue flashed a smile.

"I'll take that as intended," she said, "from now on I'm everybody's friend."

"*Just as long as there's a plate of All-Bran on the breakfast table?*"

"Check," she said, "there will be—or my name's not Sunny Sue."

• • •

KELLOGG'S ALL-BRAN relieves constipation trouble, keeps you "regular." Made from rich outer layers of whole wheat deliciously oven-toasted with malt, salt, and sugar. Makes a splendid breakfast, and many appetizing cakes, buns, and surprise dishes. 7½d. a packet from your grocer.

Every inch a Bob Martin dog!

As full of life as a dog on springs! Is your own dog like that? If he's not, it's up to you to help him. After all, *he can't tell you how he feels*, even if he's wretched.

One Bob Martin's once a day will provide, in carefully balanced proportions, those substances which help a dog to enjoy life, to be frisky and friendly—because he's really fit. Start him on Bob Martin's Condition Powder Tablets today. They cost 8d. a packet, 1/8d. a large carton.

POOR CONDITION—watch for these common signs	LISTLESSNESS	LOSS OF APPETITE	POOR COAT

For doggy good health - Bob Martin's

Ronuk Polishes

Best thing I've ever taken for

RHEUMATISM

I realise that Fynnon Salt is *a very good laxative indeed for rheumatic sufferers.* Part of its medicinal action is to increase the fluid outflow from the kidneys. This helps to free the system of poisons which *tend to be responsible for rheumatic aches and pains. If* you are a sufferer, *then take Fynnon Salt.* Large tin 2/-.

FYNNON SALT

relieves **RHEUMATISM, FIBROSITIS, NEURITIS, LUMBAGO, SCIATICA & GOUT**

Fynnon Limited, Brentford, Middx. 598F

Lord Halifax, our Foreign Secretary in 1939, with Poland's Colonel Beck. Halifax thought Poland a better military ally than Russia!

Churchill's illusion was on France's army. After this August, 1939, meeting with the French generals, he said: "You are the masters"

THE GREAT ILLUSIONS OF 1939

TEN YEARS AFTER

TEN YEARS AGO we went into it. "May it be swift and short," they said in the Commons during those fateful September hours. And there were many, even among the politicians, who believed it.

They were wrong—as most of the rest of us were wrong. We saw only a section of the stage. We knew next to nothing of the real position in men, munitions, diplomacy and morale, that was to dictate the course of the war in the next six years.

Research, reports and captured documents now confirm a picture that was only fragmentarily revealed as battle succeeded battle.

Captain Liddell Hart, the one world-authority on military history and strategy who warned of the truth, presents the first complete picture of the odds we really faced ten years ago in this opening article of a series of revaluations of the great crises of the second World War.

Captain Liddell Hart

by Captain B. H. LIDDELL HART

ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1939, the German armies invaded Poland. On Sunday, September 3, the British Government declared war on Germany, in fulfilment of the guarantee it had earlier given to Poland. Six hours later the French Government, more reluctantly, followed the British lead.

In making his fateful announcement the seventy-year-old Prime Minister, Mr. Chamberlain, finished by saying: "I trust I may live to see the day when Hitlerism has been destroyed and a liberated Europe has been re-established." His hope was unfulfilled.

In less than a month Poland had been overrun. Within nine months most of Western Europe had been submerged by the spreading flood of war. And although Hitler was ultimately overthrown, a liberated Europe has not been re-established. Ten years later, half of Europe is enclosed within the "Iron Curtain."

In welcoming the declaration of war, Mr. Greenwood, speaking for the Opposition, expressed his relief that "the intolerable agony of suspense from which all of us have suffered is over. We now know the worst." From the volume of cheers it was clear that he was expressing the general feeling of the House of Commons.

He ended: "May the war be swift and short, and may the peace which follows stand proudly for ever on the shattered ruin of an evil name."

Such a conclusion revealed the state of illusion which prevailed, among many people, when the plunge was taken. For no reasonable calculation of the respective forces and resource provided any ground for believing that the war could be "swift and short," or even for hoping that France and Britain alone would be able to overcome Germany—however long the war continued. Even more green was the assumption that "we now know the worst."

There were illusions about the strength of Poland. Lord Halifax — who, as Foreign Secretary, ought to have been well informed —believed that Poland was of more military value than Russia, and preferred to secure her as an ally. That was what he conveyed to the American Ambassador on March 24, 1939, just before the sudden decision to offer our guarantee to Poland. In July, the Inspector-General of the Forces, General Ironside, visited the Polish Army, and on his return gave what Churchill calls a "most favourable" report on it.

There were still greater illusions about the French Army. Churchill himself described it as "the most perfectly trained and faithful mobile force in Europe." Each of those descriptive words was far from the truth, especially the last. In his memoirs Churchill admits that when he saw the commander-in-chief of the French field armies a few days before the war, and saw the comparative figures of French and German strength he was so favourably impressed as to say: "But you are the masters."

This may help to explain the eagerness with which he joined in pressing the French to hasten to declare war in support of Poland—the French Ambassador's dispatch said: "One of the most excited was Mr. Winston Churchill; bursts of his voice made the telephone vibrate."

In March, too, Mr. Churchill had declared himself "in the most complete agreement with the Prime Minister" over the offer to Poland. Along with almost all Britain's political leaders he had dwelt on its value as a means of preserving peace. Lloyd George had been alone in pointing out its impracticability and danger—whereat *The Times* had scoffed at his speech

as "an outburst of unconsolable pessimism from Mr. Lloyd George, who now seems to inhabit an odd and remote world of his own."

These illusions about the prospect were not shared, however, by a number of the more sober soldiers and modern-minded students of war—particularly the small band here who had for long been expounding the new theory of mechanized warfare.

In the last week of August I had written an "appreciation" of the prospect and sent it to various political leaders of the different parties who had frequently consulted me on strategic questions.

Its sombre summing up was: *"If the Poles decide to fight rather than accept Hitler's demands, it is clear that they will in all probability be forced to yield far more territory than he is demanding. It is also clear that France and Britain can do nothing effective to prevent this loss of territory, while very doubtful whether even the utmost military efforts on their part would avail to regain it. The most probable result of prolonged efforts to restore Poland's territory would be the mutual exhaustion of all the warring countries, with the consequent establishment of Russia's supremacy in Europe.*

"A more immediate danger to France and Britain is that the demonstration of their incapacity to preserve Poland will cause them such a loss of prestige in the eyes of the world that other aggressively minded countries, now sitting on the fence, may be encouraged to join Germany in a combined effort to conquer and divide up the British and French empires."

A further note emphasized the possibility that before long the French would lose heart and drop out of the war, and that Britain would thus be left to continue alone. *"In sum, by making our stand on ground that was strategically unsound we have got into a very bad hole—perhaps the worst in our history."*

But the warning forecast was regarded in most quarters as misplaced pessimism. The prevailing mood of the moment was supercharged with emotions that drowned the sense of immediate realities and also obscured the long view.

Thus the train of European civilization rushed into the long, dark tunnel from which it only emerged after six exhausting years. Even then, the bright sunlight of victory proved illusory. For almost immediately the shadows deepened and the train plunged into a further tunnel—in which we are still travelling, and anxiously wondering whether the "cold war" with Russia will turn into a hotter war than the last.

Could Poland have held out longer? Could France and Britain have done more than they did to take the German pressure off Poland? On the face of the figures of armed strength, the answer to both questions would, at first sight, seem to be "yes."

In *numbers* of men Poland had sufficient to check the German forces on her front, and at the least impose a long delay on their advance. It would equally appear, on the figures, that the French should have been able to defeat the German forces left to oppose them in the West.

The Polish Army consisted of thirty active divisions and ten reserve divisions. It had also no less than twelve large cavalry brigades—although only one of them was motorized. Its potential strength in numbers was even larger than the total figure of divisions conveys—for she had nearly 2,500,000 "trained men" available to mobilize.

In 1928 Britain pioneered with these high-speed war trials. Yet our leaders believed till last in "rifle and sabre"

Failure to understand the new idea of war was greatest in Poland, which cherished "pathetic" faith in cavalry

The Line-up In The West

France mobilized the equivalent of 110 divisions, of which no less than sixty-five were active divisions. They included five cavalry divisions, two mechanized divisions, and one armoured division that was in process of being formed—the rest being infantry.

Of the grand total, even after providing for the defence of Southern France and North Africa against a possible threat from Italy, the French Command were able to concentrate eighty-five divisions on their northern front facing Germany. Moreover, they could mobilize 5,000,000 trained men.

Britain had promised to send four of her regular divisions to France at the outset of war—besides providing for the defence of the Middle East and the Far East—and actually sent the equivalent of five divisions. Because of the problem of sea transport, however, and the circuitous route considered necessary to avoid air attack, this initial contingent could not arrive until late in September.

Britain was planning to raise a large second-line army, but this could not begin to take the field until 1940—a fact which emphasized the futility of her guarantee to support remote Poland against any immediate threat.

Germany mobilized ninety-eight divisions, of which fifty-two were active divisions (including six of Austrians). Of the remaining forty-six divisions, however, only ten were fit for action on mobilization and even in these the bulk of the men were recruits who had only been serving about a month.

The other thirty-six divisions consisted mainly of veterans of the first World War, forty-year-olds who had little acquaintance with modern weapons and tactics. They were very short of artillery and other weapons.

It took a long time to get these divisions organized and trained

Continued on page 27

The new Capone is on the spot

by ROLAND WILD

Hollywood's underworld is his kingdom. He rules it from a bomb-proof office and tries to guard himself with radar. But not even The Boss can dodge the bullet fired in the dark

Thoughtfully, Micky Cohen leaves hospital. For him, nowhere is safe

HOLLYWOOD

MR. MICHAEL COHEN, a short, stocky gentleman who always looks as if he had come straight from the barber's chair, is proprietor of the Exclusive Men's Store on Sunset Boulevard, in the heart of the Hollywood night club district.

Mr. Cohen looks that way because he usually *has* come straight from the barber's chair, at any rate after noon, when he makes his first visit for physical improvement.

The store is elegant and expensive. In the window are English tweeds. Inside, there are a half-dozen male assistants, all of them as well manicured as the boss. When you ask the price of the matched set of airplane baggage, they have to look it up.

For it doesn't matter much to Mr. Cohen whether they sell anything from the Exclusive Men's Store. Mr. Cohen is Micky to the police, public, and the gangs that run the film colony, its betting, bootlegging, and some of its more evil traffic. Micky is the boss.

Micky comes from the East, from New York no less, and lets it be known that he regards all other gangsters on the blood-spattered and sunlit Night Club Strip as cheap little amateurs. He's the big gangster of 1949, and before he rides down his boulevard for the last time under a mound of flowers to Forest Lawn Cemetery, it might be as well to take a look at the profession as typified by one of its alumni, the true successor to Al Capone and Lucky Luciano.

Mr. Cohen Is Angry

Micky has been in hospital, suffering from a puncture in the shoulder, clumsily delivered at three-fifty-five in the morning by three unknown men who fired from across the street. Outside his door three policemen stood on guard. In three other hospital rooms lay two henchmen and a young girl.

They all suffered slight injuries from blasts of the same shotguns. And Mr. Cohen is angry about the whole thing. Bluntly, Micky hints that the police hired thugs to kill him. He knows too much of police graft, he says.

The previous time he was shot at, it was in the store, and Mr. Cohen was indulging in his favourite pastime of washing his hands, which he does twice an hour. He owes his life to this mania for cleanliness. His second-in-command, still at his desk, received the bullet. Since then, he has torn down the office at the back, where he conducts his bookie protection business, and had it fortified like a pillbox.

Micky is a rich man. His first step when taken to hospital was to hand $6,000 in notes to the doctor, with a casual "Take care of this, doc." It was his small change and his collections for the evening.

He has a lovely home in the hills, where his wife tends the garden and a maid answers the door. But there is something peculiar about the house. It is ringed by radar. At night, bells ring whenever the invisible screen is penetrated. By day, warning signals flash when a car enters the drive.

Even Mail Is Suspect

A postman was delivering two hat-boxes, sent airmail from New York. The maid looked at the postman through a grill. Then a man came to inspect him from an upper window. The package was signed for by the maid, but the parcel was left on the step. Mr. Cohen wasn't going to have bombs delivered airmail, not right into the house to wreck the furniture.

Until recently Micky's day has gone something like this: Around noon the detective calls for him, riding with him in Micky's armour-plated limousine, a 1949 Cadillac. The boss dives into the pillbox-cum-office and conducts his strange business there.

He sends out for sandwiches and milk, being a non-drinker and non-smoker. He is visited by business acquaintances and lawyers, and runs over the news of the day in his many concerns like any executive. There is the matter of the bookmaker in Santa Monica who hasn't kicked in this week. There is the major matter of the vice inquiry in the city, of which Micky is the instigator.

Lastly, there is the detail that Micky is himself on bail for one hundred thousand dollars for alleged beating up of a store-owner. (Micky thinks this sum is about right; he would be wounded in spirit if the bail were less.)

Day Starts At Sunset

Now the sun is going down over the Hollywood Hills, and Micky prepares for his real day to start. Almost invariably he goes to a movie, sometimes with his wife. He won't tell his closest friend which theatre they are going to, and he sits in the dark surrounded by his bodyguard.

Later, friends join a party at Micky's own Italian restaurant. The mobsters bring their girls and Micky orders spaghetti, sitting in state with his back to the wall. His car is always attended by one of his boys, ever since the time when there was a minor explosion when Micky stepped on the starter. ("Punks," he said. "If they were from New York that bomb would have worked good.")

Micky then takes the party to a night club and gets a table near the wall. His idea of a tip for the head waiter is a fifty-dollar bill.

At two, when the night clubs close, Micky usually goes to Sherry's Café, on the Strip, to talk to Barney Ruditsky, formerly a captain on the New York police force and now the proprietor. The party has grown bigger by this time. The hangers-on are actresses out of a job, waiters with information to sell, newspapermen waiting for a story to break, bookmakers and the mysterious dregs of a crime-ridden city.

The night when Micky went to hospital again with lead in his stocky little body, they recollected that a girl had left the bar hurriedly as Micky prepared to leave. His car had been brought round to the awning, and Micky descended, scattering his ten-dollar bills.

The loaded slugs from two shotguns peppered the party. A woman newspaper reporter was hit, the detective was hurled to the ground, and Micky rolled in the gutter clutching his shoulder. The girl screamed, clutching her stomach, and another gangster collapsed with the cliché: "They got me!"

One day soon the punks will shoot better. Micky knows it. "It's them or me now," he says. Police will be always round him, but they know Micky is doomed, and even thousand-dollar notes will be no protection, and the radar and the armour won't stop the shot in the dark.

So what's a rich gangster to do? If you have a suggestion, the address of the Exclusive Men's Store is an appropriate one; it's at Angels' Corner, Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood, California. Address all letters "Micky Cohen." And hurry.

LAVENDER KING

by HOWARD BYRNE

If you have a scented sachet in your linen cupboard, it probably started life in Linn Chilvers's garden. At seventy plus, he's still experimenting

The maestro gives some tips on the art of keeping lavender. Blooms are Giant Blue, which provide best quality oil

NOBODY REALLY KNOWS why Norfolk has become the home of English lavender. Maybe it is because the balance of soil, sunlight and moisture around the Wash is just right; or perhaps there is not quite so much of the lavender-killing "shab" virus in these parts.

There are probably lots of reasons. But biggest of all is the fact that Linn Chilvers, the spry septuagenarian nurseryman who has become to lavender what Russell is to the lupin, happens to be a Norfolk man.

Chilvers's father set out some lavender clumps when he founded the family nursery at Hunstanton in 1874. It was regarded as a bit far north for lavender, which until then had grown chiefly in Surrey, Hertfordshire and Kent. But the clumps thrived as an edging along the nursery paths, and by the end of the century lavender walks had become a fad which spread from Norfolk all over England.

Most of those original plants were killed by shab, a mysterious virus disease which can race across an acre of lavender like a prairie fire. It is such a scourge that, on one occasion, Chilvers destroyed 6,000 plants because he discovered one shab-infected bush.

"That day," he recalls, "I came very near deciding to give up lavender as a nurseryman's folly. Instead I determined to find out everything that was known about shab with a view towards finding some way of controlling it."

Almost half a century of battling with shab has taught Chilvers many things about the killer. He knows that one almost sure-fire warning of an attack is the presence among the plants of *chenepodium*.

This is a long name for a very common weed which grows waist-high in six weeks and is frequently the host to shab, though it is seldom destroyed by it. Chilvers suspects that hares, which nibble the lavender stocks, pass on the shab spores.

Must Be Burnt

Sprays are of little use because, when they are strong enough to kill the spores, they kill the plant, too; the only sure way of getting shab out of a crop is to burn it out. That is why, when you look over his rolling purple lavender fields, you find them dotted here and there with blackened patches.

By patient cross-breeding, Chilvers has finally developed the Royal Purple, a species which appears to be highly shab-resistant; but Royal Purple produces a low oil yield, of a type which is useful only for blending. Now he is looking for a way to get the Royal Purple to give him the same quantity and quality of oil as he gets from the Giant Blue with which most of his acres are planted.

The new stock is grown from layers or cuttings and the plants are not allowed to flower during the first year, so as to make them more sturdy and bushy. The blossom yield is heaviest between the third and fifth years. By the eighth year, the land will support no further lavender, but will grow excellent potatoes.

Lavender hates shade and likes sunny, open fields, with a hot summer to produce the maximum oil yield. Chilvers, planting both early and late varieties, spreads his harvesting from mid-July to early September.

Cutting the flowers—a tedious job, done by hand with a short, stout knife — provides seasonal employment for forty or fifty Norfolk housewives, most of whom have been doing it for years. Blossoms gathered during the hot hours of the day produce most oil.

"When the bees are busy gathering honey from the lavender," says Chilvers, "we should be busy, too. Where there's honey, there's oil."

The large-scale cultivation of lavender was an experiment which Chilvers began with a neighbouring estate owner, Mr. Dusgate, of Fring Hall, in 1932. The company which they formed now produces more lavender than all the rest of the British growers put together.

One field alone stretches over fifty acres, and Chilvers expects to have harvested between eighty and a hundred tons of blossoms this year—the bulk of it to be distilled in his own refinery into lavender oil.

For Home Growers

For those who grow their own lavender to be preserved in sachets and tucked away in linen cupboards, Chilvers suggests that the main thing to be borne in mind is that lavender spoils when it is damp.

Sprigs need to be laid out on paper for about six weeks, and the flowers will then shell off from the stems themselves.

For those thinking of going into lavender-farming on a big scale, Chilvers has plenty of warnings. Few crops are more hazardous. Heavy rains or high winds (and, of course, hail worst of all) can knock fifty per cent off the value of a field in a few hours.

When the sacks of freshly cut flowers have been tumbled into Chilvers's distillation vat and heated, the oil which condenses from the vapour is crude and raw. It needs ageing, maturing and blending with various other types of oil before the ideal scent is evolved.

When the proper balance has been achieved (Chilvers works to a formula which dates back to George IV), the final product is broken down with spirit. A really first-rate lavender water should contain practically no water at all.

English lavender commands a much higher price in the world market than that grown in France, Spain or Italy, because it produces a sweeter oil. Since the war, Chilvers has been exporting most of his oil to America for dollars.

Better For The French

But at the moment the deflation of the French franc has put French growers, who always produced a cheaper oil, in a favourable position. For the first time since the war, the Norfolk lavender acreage will not be expanded this year.

But there will still be plenty for those who want lavender water on their handkerchiefs and dried lavender to sweeten the linen—and keep away the moths.

As to whether lavender *does* keep away moths, Chilvers smiles and says: "Our grandmothers all believed it did. I've never found any scientific evidence to prove it. But who am I to argue with grandma?"

Neighbourly

by WILL SCOTT

ILLUSTRATED BY [illegible]

Suburban people were a stand-offish lot, the new arrivals decided. But, perhaps, first impressions were misleading

"The folk *live* where I come from," Mason told them. "The people here are dead thirty years before their funeral"

ONE MONTH OF Maxwell Park and Mary stopped smiling at her neighbours. Jim stopped looking over the garden wall. They'd got one of the nicest houses in one of the best avenues, but already they were beginning to have their doubts.

In her mind's eye Mary had seen the new address on her notepaper weeks before the notepaper was even ordered. In his mind's ear Jim had heard himself saying to the fellows at the office: "We're out at Maxwell Park now, you know. Bought a little place there." But now they were there it was different.

It wasn't the sort of place where you borrowed a lawn mower after three days or became a star of the tennis club at the end of the first week. You could *look* at the tennis club as you went past. At least, Jim supposed you could. So far nobody had dashed out to tell him to stop it.

"You can't call them mixers," said Jim. "They don't exactly want to know you, do they?"

"I hope it's going to be all right," said Mary.

It was the same on the train up to town in the mornings. Jim didn't belong. He was a foreigner.

One man did actually speak to him after a couple of months, but he managed to do it without looking higher than Jim's tie. He wanted to know if there was a volcano in China with a name starting with Z. Another time he wanted the scientific name for a rainbow.

Jim hated all crossword fiends, but he hated this one most. To himself he called the man the Penguin because he had a round and black-and-white appearance. Nine times out of ten he found himself sitting next to the Penguin. You haven't long for seat-choosing on the morning trains from Maxwell Park.

"I'm not sure this move of ours is going to work," said Jim one evening.

"If they don't want us I'm sure I don't want them," said Mary. "Let them get on with it."

"Exciting," said Jim miserably.

Then one morning he found a friend.

The middle of the train where he got aboard was packed tight and he had to stand in the corridor. And even standing he found to his disgust that he had to be standing next to the Penguin.

After the train started the guard squeezed his way through.

"Plenty of seats at the front and rear of the train!" he called.

That thinned them out until only Jim and another man were left standing in the middle corridor.

Jim's eyes met the other man's. He felt he had to smile. So did the other man. No doubt each was wondering why the other was standing when there were plenty of seats going. Jim had to say something. He put on a knowing look.

"They can keep the ends of the train," he said.

The other man nodded. "That's what I always say."

From his accent Jim guessed him to be from Yorkshire or Lancashire. He had a hearty manner, but he was pleasant enough. Jim liked the way he smiled. It was the first sign of friendship that had come from Maxwell Park.

"It isn't a question of being nervous," he said. "But the ends of the train would be the bits to get it if anything happened."

"Exactly," said the other man. "I remember once in Manchester. . . ."

And away he was into an amazing story of his youth. It was a refreshing change to meet somebody who was from somewhere as far away as Manchester. The others, you'd have thought, seeing them there on the train, had never been anywhere but Maxwell Park and their London office.

As the conversation went on, Jim and the other man found they had a number of things in common. Such as the inferiority of certain brands of razor blades and the futility of hoeing in dry weather. He was sorry they had not Manchester in common, but he had to confess that he'd never been there.

"You'd like it," said the other man. "Live place. Live people. Of course, I've got to be near London for business, but there's nowhere like Manchester."

Which led him into a story about Belle Vue Park. A comic story. He could hardly stop laughing himself.

For the very first time Jim enjoyed his journey on the morning train. When he got home that evening, he said to Mary: "I met a nice chap on the train this morning. Lives over the Rise."

But Mary wasn't listening.

"Jim," she said, "I shall *never* be happy in this terrible suburb. The people are too awful for anything."

"Well, this man——" Jim began. But Mary swept on.

"There was a girl in the library this morning. She would talk at the very *top* of her voice—all about herself and her precious family and their importance in the world. As if that kind of nonsense matters to anybody these days. All 'My *dear!*' and 'As I said to the Mayoress'! I thought such people were extinct. And when a man drew her attention to the 'Silence' notice—the things she said *then*! There was actually almost a row in the end. It was most embarrassing."

"I hope you didn't get dragged in?" said Jim.

"I don't love this place enough to take sides, I can assure you," said Mary. "Although I did feel like telling that ghastly creature just what I thought of her. Why are some people so impossible? I'm afraid your fish is a little overdone. Everything's gone wrong today. *She* started it. I thought, 'If we've got to live in a place with people like you. . . .' Sorry, dear. You were saying something."

"Er——" said Jim. "Oh! Oh, yes. His name's Mason."

"*Whose* name is Mason?" Mary asked.

"This man I met on the train."

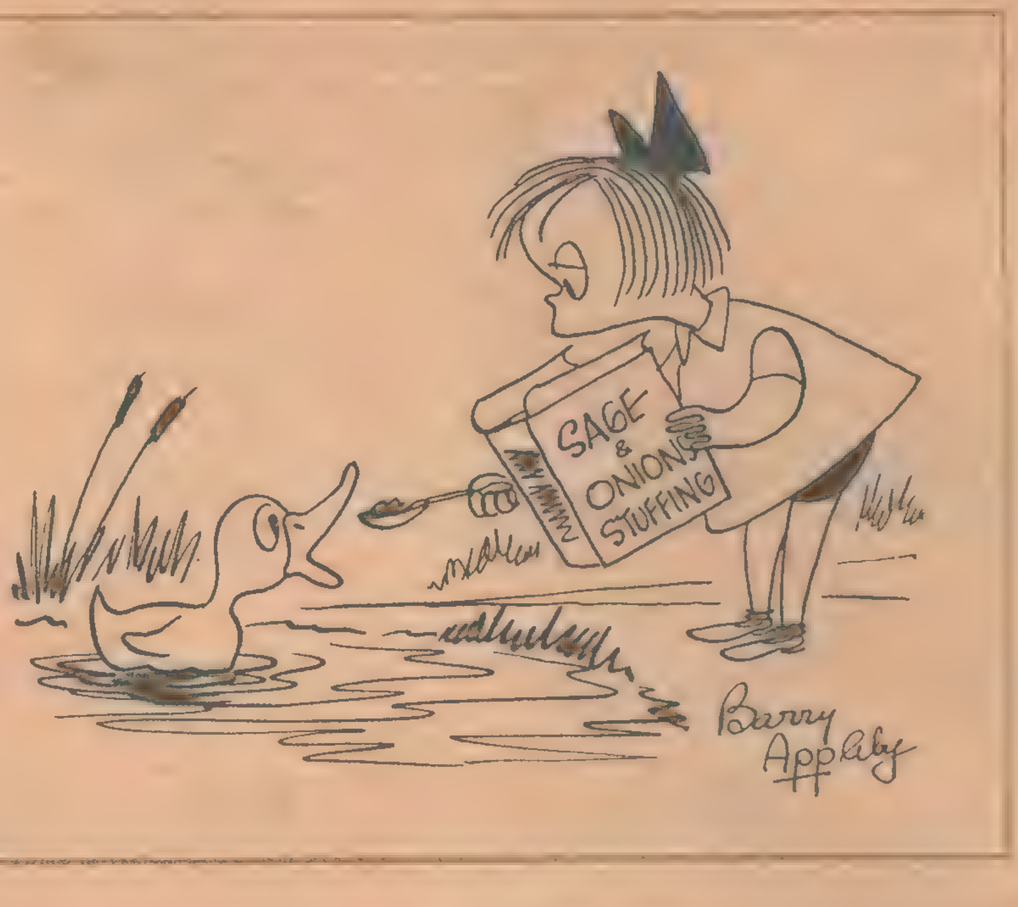
"I didn't know you'd met *anybody* on the train."

"I was telling you," said Jim.

"Sorry, dear," said Mary. "It's been one of those days with me. Women like that always put me off. Why can't people be *natural*? Look—if you leave your fish much longer it will be too cold to eat."

The next morning he and Mason managed to get seats side by side, and Jim was able to ignore the Penguin completely. The train was in town almost before he realized it had started. He began to look forward to his mornings on the train. At last he had lots of little things to tell Mary when he got home, little things Mason had said.

"You'd like him, my dear," he told



her. "He's a really live fellow. Not like the other dopes."

Inside a week "Good morning" had become "Hallo," and inside a fortnight "Hallo" had become "Hallo, old chap." Then one morning Mason tucked his newspaper down the side of the seat and said to Jim: "You don't know many people in the Park, do you?"

"We don't know anybody," said Jim.

"I know what it's like when you're new," said Mason. "And some of 'em are a bit peculiar round here. Not like in Manchester. You couldn't live there for weeks without knowing anybody. Well, we shall have to do something about it. Doing anything Friday evening?"

"Not that I know of," said Jim.

"We wondered if you and your wife would care to come round for the evening," said Mason.

"That's very nice of you," said Jim.

"Well," said Mason, "people ought to try to be neighbourly, don't you think? Friday evening, then?"

"We shall be delighted," said Jim.

MARY managed to get somebody to come in to look after the youngster on the Friday evening and at eight o'clock they set out in their little two-seater for the Masons' house over the Rise.

"This is lovely!" said Mary. "I don't know when we last had an evening out together."

Presently Jim said: "That'll be the house. He said it was the only one on the Avenue with blue gates."

He was about to pull up when suddenly Mary clutched his sleeve.

"Don't stop!" she said.

"What——?"

"Drive *on!*" said Mary. "*Please!*"

Jim, puzzled, accelerated, and they turned a corner.

"Thank goodness she didn't see us!" Mary said with a sigh of relief.

"Who didn't see us?" Jim asked.

"The girl at the blue gates."

"That would be Mrs. Mason."

"Oh, Jim," said Mary, "she's that dreadful creature who made the scene at the library. We *can't* know her!"

"Oh, my godfathers!" said Jim.

"Darling," said Mary, "we just couldn't. Visiting her and having her visit us. Everybody simply *loathes* her. We'd never have another friend in the Park. We'd be finished. Don't you see? She's *terrible!*"

"But we've promised," said Jim.

"I don't care," said Mary, tossing her head. "I will not be on speaking terms with such a person!"

After a long silence Jim said, "But what are we going to *do*? I meet Mason on the train every morning. We can't just not turn up. This is ghastly! It puts me in such an awful fix."

When they reached home he decided that for the moment the only thing to do was to think up an excuse and telephone Mason.

"I'll tell him you've been suddenly taken ill," he said.

"I certainly feel ill," Mary declared. "It's this place. I shall have no nerves left if we live here another year."

Jim apologized profusely over the telephone. But a glance over his shoulder persuaded him that it wasn't all that of an excuse. Mary did look ill. Of course, you could never tell with women when they were digging their heels in. It might be just the way she'd worked herself up. Anyway, as he explained to Mason—and, over his shoulder, to Mary—if she was no better next day he'd call in the doctor to look her over. It might be nothing—only a night's rest needed. They were both terribly disappointed at having to miss an evening they had looked forward to so keenly. But Jim was sure Mason would understand.

"Apologize to your wife for us, will you?" he said. "And I'll see you on the train in the morning."

Jim had an uncomfortable journey to town next morning. Mason hoped Mary's illness was not serious. Jim said he didn't think so. She'd probably been overdoing it a bit.

"Tough luck," said Mason. "Just when we were all set for a jolly evening. Oh, well—plenty of other times, eh?"

"Oh, yes," said Jim. "Yes, rather."

That was the first of a lot of uncomfortable journeys for Jim. He had to explain that Mary was "still very tired" and "a trifle better today, I think," and "getting about, but not up to much."

"What she wants," said Mason, "is company. Now, that deferred evening of ours. What about next Friday?"

Jim felt as if somebody had kicked him in the stomach. He rushed out a rapid excuse about the annual accounts and said he wasn't sure what time he'd be home for the next week or two.

"Any time that suits you, old chap," said Mason. "You let me know when you're through with the accounts. I shall see you on the train every day."

Which was the trouble. Jim wondered how it would end. Would the dreadful day dawn when, all excuses finished, he had to say: "Look here, Mason, it's not a bit of use keeping on inviting us—my wife *won't* come—she can't stand your wife at any price"?

THAT night Jim began to argue. He told Mary that his morning journeys on the train were becoming a misery. "Why can't you give Mrs. Mason a chance?" he said. "People are often very different when you get to know them well. First impressions are so misleading. And we've got to know *somebody* in the suburb or go mad."

As Jim argued, Mary argued back. Voices rose. Mary cried. Jim petted her. Then, seeing his miserable face, she stroked his hair and said she didn't like to see him looking like that.

"Well, it is a spot to be in," Jim said mournfully. "I mean, darling, meeting him on the train every morning and having to think up a new lie. And he's such a damn nice chap."

Mary, womanlike, suddenly said, "All right, dear."

Jim looked up.

"For your sake," said Mary. "We shall have to ask them back, I suppose, but so long as we needn't *always* be meeting them. . . ."

"Well, of course not," said Jim.

And so at last "annual accounts" were over and Jim was able to report that Mary was fit again. And the proposed social evening came back on the agenda. And once more a Friday was booked.

To Jim's surprise, as well as Mary's, their first visit to the Masons' home was a huge success. Mrs. Mason turned out to be not a bit like *that*. She was a sympathetic young woman with an infectious laugh. In no time at all Mary was on her side against the impossible people of the suburb. And she soon saw that Jim had been right. People were indeed different when you got to know them well.

As for Mason himself, it was a long time since she had met a man who was so full of amusing anecdotes. You'd have thought he had spent his first twenty years in Manchester for the sole purpose of collecting comic stories about the place. And his enthusiasm!

"The folk *live* where I come from," he told them. "They don't just earn the money. Bless my soul!—some of these people in Maxwell Park are dead thirty years before their funeral. Do you know what we'd do to people like that if we had 'em up in Manchester?"

He told them.

On their way home Mary was most enthusiastic.

"They're most entertaining people," she said. "*She's* not a bit like I imagined."

"What did I tell you?" said Jim. "You can't go by casual impressions. I *knew* she'd be all right. He's such a good sort, his wife *must* be okay."

Next morning on the train Mason produced a photograph of the house he'd been born in at Manchester. And on Monday morning he brought a large packet of pictures of the town itself.

"I'm surprised you've never been there," he said. "You'd like it. Life's so different. You'd get on well with the people." He put the packet of pictures in Jim's hand. "Take 'em home and show the wife. I know she'll be interested."

One evening Mary told him that she and Mrs. Mason, out shopping, had had coffee together. There had been talk of holidays.

"I suppose they're going to Manchester?" said Jim.

"People don't go to Manchester for holidays," said Mary.

"I only wondered," said Jim.

"They're going to Devon," said Mary. "I wondered if he'd said anything."

"As a matter of fact," said Jim, "I didn't get more than a word or two with old Mason this morning. Somehow or other I got landed with the Penguin, helping him do his crossword."

"I thought you didn't like crosswords?" said Mary.

"They're not bad when you get used to them," said Jim. "It's all a matter of getting into the habit."

"I've been thinking," said Mary. "It would be rather jolly if we all went together, wouldn't it?"

"All went together?" said Jim. "Who? Where?"

"Devon," said Mary. "I mean if we went with the Masons."

It must have been something in his face. She said, "Anything wrong, dear?"

"No," said Jim.

"Come now! Tell Mary!"

"Now look here, darling," he said. "I don't want you to get me wrong. There's nothing, really. Only—well, do you remember I once said you've got to know people before you can form opinions. I mean—well, Mason's a jolly fine chap. I like him. Only he *will* talk about Manchester. I've tried to stop him, but you can't. Nothing else interests him, really. It's Manchester from the start until you fall asleep. He's a grand fellow, but it's a bit wearing, you must admit."

"Oh," said Mary.

"I know you and she are great pals," said Jim. "And that stands. You've been a different woman since you met her. And I'll stick almost anything that makes you happy, my sweet. But I just could not survive a fortnight in Devon with dear old Mason. Manchester all the time! I get half an hour on the train every morning and four hours every Friday evening. Sometimes I get so worked up I feel like telling him to go to hell."

"Lucky I didn't say anything," said Mary. "I didn't know you felt like that about it."

BUT when he got home next evening, she said softly, "Jim."

"Yes," said Jim.

"I had coffee with Mrs. Mason again this morning. *She* mentioned it. Off her own bat. I mean . . . Devon."

"No!" cried Jim.

"She said we could talk about it tonight."

"Tonight?"

"You haven't forgotten it's Friday? We're going to their place."

Jim's face went pale.

"We are *not* going to their place tonight!" he said in a loud voice.

"But, Jim——"

"Not before I've thought up an excuse about Devon. A cast-iron excuse. I'll phone him and say I've got the flu."

"But he'll see you on the train tomorrow."

"I'll tell him it was a false alarm. Anything. But I'm *not* going to be organized into a fortnight of Manchester in Devon!"

He was so worked up when he telephoned Mason that he managed to sound quite ill. Mason was full of sympathy and he was full of apologies. When it was over his brow was damp.

"I don't know what you're going to say to him in the morning," said Mary.

As things turned out, Jim didn't say much. He explained that it hadn't been the flu after all, and he mentioned casually that he and Mary would be holidaying on the Broads with relations. After that he spent most of the time dodging Mason's eye.

He was very thankful to have the Penguin and his crossword on the other side of him. The Penguin, he decided, wasn't at all a bad sort of chap when you came to know him.

It really *was* strange how wide of the mark you could be with your first impressions of people.

He'd have to ask the Penguin round for an hour or two one evening.

Glen Laithwaite takes in the parcels at his new kind of shop. He calls it a Launder-ese. His next step: a while-you-type laundry for office workers

HE TAKES IN THE TOWN'S WASHING

by HENRY FIRTH

Glen Laithwaite knows that a fortune can still be made from a bright idea. He should do. He has had two of them

NINETY YEARS AGO a Scottish doctor named Samuel Smiles wrote a book called *Self-Help*. It recounted, with many appropriate morals, a hundred rags-to-riches stories, stirring tales of industrious apprentices who became their own masters through Determination and Application. It became a Victorian bible. It inspired a generation.

But could a postwar Smiles find material in Britain today? Would he find that pensions and social security and the rest of it had smothered the spirit of the ingenious mechanics and merchant adventurers?

Or would he detect some new Lipton laying his plans behind a shop counter, a new Nuffield hatching ideas in a bicycle shop? I believe he might.

Of course, the backgrounds would be different. The "rags" might turn out to be demob suits and the riches —with income tax at 9s. in the £— might not be so conspicuous. But the enterprise and determination would still be there.

The new Smiles might, I feel, open a chapter with the observation that for the man with the eye for it there is always opportunity. For when one door closes, another opens.

Fifteen years ago a young Manchester dental mechanic just starting on his career noticed three facts. The first was that England was a land of false teeth. The second was that these false teeth were always getting broken. And the third was that it was much easier to drop into a shop than make an appointment with a dentist.

Glen Laithwaite saw the opportunity and in 1934 opened one of the first shops in Manchester to take in the British public's dentures for repair. The business prospered and sprouted branches.

The Bottom Fell Out

But events do not arrange themselves for the convenience of business men. In 1948 the bottom suddenly fell out of the dental repair business. For the Health Act provided free dentures and—here was the sting—only at dentists' orders.

The business Laithwaite had spent fifteen years building up looked like disappearing. "When you've been on your own for so long," he says, "you do not feel like working for a boss."

He began to cast around for ideas.

He was still turning several propositions over in his mind when he visited a friend's house in Manchester. The friend had just become the possessor of a new washing machine. Proudly, he put it through its paces.

The thing was a complete automaton. You dropped nine pounds of dirty clothes in and turned a switch and the ¼-h.p. motor did the rest.

It soaked the wash, drubbed it, rinsed it, damp-dried it. Half an hour later the clothes emerged, clean.

Idea From The Backyards

Laithwaite was impressed. For generations, he knew, for the women of Lancashire, Monday had been a trial of strength in steamy kitchens and crowded backyards, a day of raw hands and aching backs. The laundry vans passed the poorer streets by. For many thousands of mothers, washing day remained a horror which made them old before their time.

To such harassed women what a deliverance one of these gleaming white robots would bring! But the machines were costly. And, even if the money was available, so many flats and small houses—especially in these days—had no room for them.

Pretty obviously, the use of this beneficent machine would be severely limited. It seemed a pity.

That started Laithwaite thinking:

supposing someone were to buy a row of the machines? Supposing he installed them somewhere handy? And supposing he rented them—like rowing boats—at so much a half-hour?

Anyway, it was an idea.

Manchester is fortunate in possessing an excellent technical and commercial library. Laithwaite used it. He began with the elementary textbooks about laundries and worked his way through to the profounder ones. For six months he read about laundries and laundering.

His idea had, he discovered, been anticipated. In the United States a chain of 5,000 self-operated "launderettes" already stretched from coast to coast. At least that showed that the idea was practicable.

But Glen Laithwaite was a Bolton man, and Bolton men are not by nature impetuous. His next step was characteristic. He installed a few machines behind closed doors in his little dental repair shop in Regent Street, Salford. The neighbours began to get their washing done free.

He tried different sorts of machines. He tried a boiler heated by coke and one heated by gas. He sought for the ideal cleansing agent as the alchemists had once sought for the elixir of life.

Partly because the shop was so small, partly because he found that different sorts of washing needed different times and treatments he decided to depart from the American pattern and have his machines operated not by the customers themselves, but by his own staff.

That had the additional advantage of avoiding queues or booking. It also meant that a man would call with his wife's washing, whereas he would probably draw the line at doing it himself—even by machinery.

The period of trial and error lasted three months, and Laithwaite reckons it cost him several hundred pounds. When the process was worked out, his wife came down to the shop to help train the girl assistants.

With twelve machines installed, he threw open the doors to the public. He felt confident that he could meet whatever was coming.

As things turned out, it was as well. Within the first hour and a half so many bundles poured in that the shop had to close.

Fascinated by the novel spectacle of so much dirty linen being washed in public, crowds gathered on the pavements outside. To prevent obstruction the window had to be whitened.

Snags Soon Appeared

Despite the trial run, snags began to appear. The machines got through more hot water than had been expected. The supply gave out. An extra storage tank had to be installed.

The shop was in the middle of dockland. Some of the washing brought in was very dirty. "The simple process of washing turned out," says Laithwaite, "to be a very difficult business. Some clothes hardly needed washing—and some really needed brainwork to get them clean." Customers had to be educated to separate woollens and dirty overalls.

In an effort to find the best possible cleansing agent, laundry scientists were called in. But the problems of "while-you-wait" washing were new to them, too. Finally, a formula was perfected. What it is, Laithwaite isn't telling.

But in the end a smooth routine was established. Every morning soon after eight the washing begins to roll across the counter.

It comes by car and it comes by pram; it arrives in suitcases and wrapped in towels.

Husbands drop it off on the way to the office, housewives call in on their shopping round. Most of all, it comes by children bearing down from all points of the compass.

Robots Do The Work

"We do the washing while you do your shopping," says the big yellow sign in Regent Road. After six months the novelty has still not entirely worn off, and many passers pause on the pavement to watch the battery of throbbing white robots and read the card which undertakes to hand back within the hour at a cost of 3s. eight pounds of clean damp-dried laundry—for instance, two tablecloths, three pillow cases, two shirts, two towels, two aprons, three sets of cotton underwear, a sheet and six handkerchiefs.

Today, with a manager and three girl assistants, the place is at last showing a profit. But Laithwaite confesses that—as so many pioneers before him have found—starting up ran away with much more money than he had expected. For an economic unit, he says, you really need twenty machines and a capital not far short of £4,000.

When he was planning the business he set the price at 3s. for eight pounds of washing, with the idea that this might offer a margin for reduction later. Instead he finds that he cut it pretty fine.

Soap or detergents can run away with as much as a shilling a wash. And they use 20,000 gallons of water —£2—and a ton of coke a week.

Another factor they had failed to allow for sufficiently was the heavy depreciation of the machines. Designed for household use, they were being run for fifty hours a week.

Now, guided by this experience, the makers are steadily improving the design. And a washing machine mechanic has been taken on the staff.

Having thus bought his experience, Laithwaite now hopes to open his second while-you-wait laundry without any worries at all. It is in a busy office area. The theory is that clerks and typists will drop their laundry off on their way to their desks, pick it up again on the way home.

In his first shop, Laithwaite found that ninety per cent of the business came from the surrounding streets. Obviously, location is important.

The best, he believes, might prove to be a middle-class district with many large blocks of flats.

Now the "while-you-wait" robot laundry idea is getting around and people keep turning up in Manchester to ask Laithwaite's advice on starting one. So far this has been given freely, but with a caution: "Don't imagine this is a goldmine."

Laundry Costs Halved

It has, he claims, three big assets. It works at half the price of normal laundries. Much of the washing that comes in carries no laundry marks—proving that a new class of users is being tapped. It can deliver the wash within an hour—a big advantage to people whose wardrobe is limited, an advantage also to women who go out to work. A third point with a strong appeal to some is that each customer's washing is done separately and kept apart throughout.

What we have here, says Laithwaite, is a new social institution which is going to work its way across Britain. He believes that pretty soon the wash tub and the rubbing board are going to look like barbaric anachronisms.

A difficulty about new institutions is that you have to invent names for them. Laithwaite has tackled that problem, too, and decided on "Launder-ese."

That afternoon he was off to inspect a possible site for "Launder-ese No. 3." Advancing slowly but steadily, financing each new installation out of the profits of those that went before, he looks ahead to a chain of blue-and-white "launder-ese" girdling Manchester, their rows of glossy robots churning gaily, delivering more and more women from the wash-day ordeal, and Mr. N. G. Laithwaite from a rather different sort of ordeal—the drudgery of working for a boss.

Women cautiously look in at other people's washing being cleaned. Laithwaite uses a secret formula

How does coin go through top glass into the other? Jack Hughes demonstrates his classic Coins in Glass trick

Magician's Parlour

by DENNIS HOLMAN

It's a den of deception where Ladies Vanish and bells answer questions. But the trick inventor still has one insoluble problem: how to make magic pay

JACK HUGHES leaves the room for a few moments and suddenly you are aware that something is going on. Surely the design on the fire-screen was just a green shrub? Now there are little pink buds on it, getting bigger and struggling to open. The shrub is alive and bursting into flower!

Hughes comes back into the room, pleased with the effect of his fire-screen. "A little something for the magician's den," he says. "Only £8 10s."

The screen is actually of painted glass with patches left blank where the flowers are to appear, and the pattern of the shrub filled in on a background. Between the background and the screen the flowers slip slowly into position, drawn up over a pulley by a weighted piston sliding into a cylinder and controlled by a screw at the air vent.

The Innocent Look

Hughes is a trick inventor who lives and works in a cosy confusion of gadgets — toy ducks, owls, dwarfs, trays, boxes, dolls, top hats, beer mugs —innocent-looking on the face of things, but, you soon discover, all magical. When a conjurer wants a new trick for his repertoire he goes usually to one of the back-room boys of magic—to someone like Jack Hughes.

Demonstrating some of his inventions, Hughes will say, "Here is Dippy the Duck." Dippy sits on a narrow tank affair and dips his head down and picks up things. Hughes will start by asking the onlooker to choose three cards. Hughes shuffles them back and drops the pack into the tank. There is a little patter with Dippy, who then dips his head into the tank and picks out the chosen cards-one by one. Last year a magician won the International Brotherhood of Magicians' Shield performing with Dippy. The trick costs £2 10s.

It is a neatly engineered affair, because Dippy merely dips for preselected cards and his success depends on the performer's ability to force three duplicate cards on his audience.

Dippy is an exception. Most of Hughes's tricks are so designed, he claims, that they can readily be performed without any previous experience of magic. His Spirit Bell has baffled every magician who has seen the trick and tried to work it out. It consists of a box, which Hughes opens. Inside can be seen a bell, a battery, and a press button.

The bell rings if the button is pressed but, with the lid on, this appears quite impossible. Yet when Hughes puts on the lid, and holds the box in his hand and asks it questions, the bell answers with one ring for Yes and two rings for No.

The answer comes in a sealed envelope when the trick is bought for £2 10s. The switch can be pushed across surreptitiously, exposing a small metal rib which completes the electrical circuit when the lid is pressed.

If Hughes attempted to demonstrate his inventions in one go, the performance would take him about sixteen hours; he has more than a hundred to his credit—all created in the last twelve years. Previously a cabinet maker by profession, he took up conjuring and used his craft to make his own apparatus, often improving on the standing trick.

News Got Round

It was not long before his ability was discovered, and more and more frequently Devon magicians took to visiting the "magical den" in Exeter where Hughes lived and worked. A good trick craftsman is a rare phenomenon, whereas magicians clamouring for new tricks are not, and Hughes was advised to take his talents to London.

In London he met the late Will Goldston, the well-known dealer in magic, who soon put Hughes to devising exclusive effects, and in 1937 he produced a trick known as the Television Glass Frame—a "winner" that was soon being performed all over the world, though few magicians at the time knew the name of the inventor. Those days Hughes sold his ideas outright.

Many are still being used on the halls by top-grade professionals. His most famous trick of that period was Coins in Glass.

Coins in Glass is now considered a classic. As one magician said: "It will be performed long after Jack has passed over."

Four half-crowns are placed on a small stand. The magician holds a tray upon which he puts a small whisky glass and over this an inverted tumbler. Tray and glasses are then covered with a piece of silk, and one by one the magician makes as though to take the coins, hold them over the tray and drop them. They do not drop, though they vanish, and a clink is heard each time under the silk. When the silk is removed the half-crowns are in the whisky glass under the tumbler. Cost of the trick, excluding half-crowns, is £3 10s.

There are two problems here. One is causing four coins to vanish, and the other is getting four others into the whisky glass.

The first is comparatively simple—each time the magician pretends to lift them off the stand he actually tips them off their groove and they slide quietly into the bottom of the stand. The second is a little more involved—under cover of the silk a trap door falls under

the tumbler, lowering the whisky glass so that its mouth is below a slot through which four previously set coins are pushed one at a time into the glass. The clink is synchronized with the "business" going on outside.

The glass fits on to a small pin to prevent its slipping when the trap door falls at an acute angle.

Hughes gets his ideas by setting himself a problem and thinking and tinkering until he answers it. "He's thinking magic all day," his wife says, "and he dreams of it at night. If I take him to the pictures, it's likely he'll pay no attention at all. But he'll come home and begin working on some new way of deceiving the eye."

A trick may be novel, but hardly new, because magicians have in one way or another been seeming to cause things to appear, disappear, change, move and penetrate obstacles for about 6,000 years. Hughes always tries to go one better.

His props are simple and natural-looking; many could be used for the purpose they appear intended. Magical fashions have changed. It is now considered bad psychology to produce a mysteriously shaped object that immediately sets the audience a puzzle trying to figure out what it is.

"This," Hughes demonstrates, "is a simple little picture frame on a stand." There is no back to the frame so that you can see both sides of the card that is put in. But after the object is covered with a handkerchief for a moment and revealed again, the card has gone. Had the legerdemain not been hidden you would have seen the thin base of the stand swing up on a hinge and tuck away the card in a narrow slot.

Smart Aleck Special

Several modern tricks are designed to provoke the smart onlooker until he thinks he has the answer, when, hey presto, a magnificent denouement baffles him completely. The Lady Vanishes is such a trick. A small tray with red drapery round it is held up while two oblong uprights are fitted into it. Between these is dropped the Queen of Hearts. The uprights are removed and the Lady has vanished.

"She's under the tray," the smart onlooker says, and sure enough she is swinging by tapes under the tray. "Let's try again," the magician suggests, but this time the drapery is ripped off and the Lady has vanished in earnest. The clever one wouldn't think of examining the uprights, but she is hiding snugly in one of these.

Hughes caters for the small trick music hall and party performer who needs a convenient, portable repertoire. Props for a slick half-hour show needn't cost more than £15, and £10 could be earned at a children's party without any previous conjuring experience. Beginner or not, the conjurer would be expected to produce things out of an empty hat or box, but what would be more effective than to lift out five large alarm clocks and place them on a little stand where they start ringing clamorously as he bows and walks off the stage. Only behind the scenes would they know that the clocks are hollow, capable of fitting one into another, and the alarm bells are in the stand, wired up to a battery.

The gay Production Box is one of the oldest and most persistent illusions. There are doors all round which Hughes opens to reveal more doors, but being a magician he now lifts the box to allow the cabinet, containing a nest of clocks, flags, a rabbit, to slide down where it will be covered by the outer doors hanging down. It is done very quickly. The audience doesn't notice that before the box is replaced on the stand the inner doors are shut to allow the container to slip up once more. Simple when you look behind the scenes! Watch for it next time.

The curse of the trick inventor is the pirate. It is hard to patent a trick. It can be registered with the Magic Circle, and a member can be penalized for such unmagical conduct as lifting another's trick, but all the copyist has to do is alter the idea a little to make it his own.

Quick Sale The Answer

Hughes is trying to beat the pirate by marketing his inventions quickly, cheaply, in large numbers distributed as widely as possible. He showed me pages of clients' addresses all over the world. Yet, according to Willane, the Immaculate Inebriate and winner of several international magical awards, "Though Jack Hughes is absolutely first rate, he's barely making a living out of the game." Clever as he is, Hughes has had no return on a lot of his work, all through his career.

Not so long ago he was called upon to devise a picture of Dorian Gray that actually changed from a handsome young man into an ugly, diabolical, old one, and later back into the young man. The assignment was for the dramatization of Oscar Wilde's novel for a suburban theatre. Hughes was offered £30. He got to work and produced a most effective metamorphosis, but he is still whistling for his £30.

Davenports—the firm which sells practically everything magical from a vanishing handkerchief for a shilling to more elaborate mystery for £500—has about eighty illusions, once the property of men like Maskelyne, Nikola, Lyle, Owen Clark, Col-Ling-Soo, Dante, Dowler, Levante, Blackstone, Charlton and Chefalo, stored for safety in the crypt of Holy Trinity Church, Kingsway. It has acquired more than 5,000 of the best magical ideas put across in the last half-century, and will buy new ones, but you'd have to invent a trick a week to make a decent living out of it.

Some Weigh Tons

Illusions are expensive. They have to be made to fit a particular assistant, and some illusions may weigh several tons. For £10 10s. Hughes sells a portable guillotine which will slice a potato but leaves his wife's hand untouched—there are two blades, one used for demonstrating there is no deception, the other in two sections which slides down on either side of the wrist. But for an illusion like the Chair of Death or the Million Dollar Mystery you'd pay through the nose. There's money for the inventor who can think up something really new.

At the moment, Hughes is working on a means of sawing a woman in half down from the top of the head in full view of the audience. One illusionist has offered him £20 a week for as long as he uses it. But another has £500 ready to buy it outright. Hughes scratches his head. "People say I'd do better to take £20 a week," he says. "But I don't know. I think I'd like to have that £500."

John Bull colour photograph by William Kemp

The guillotine: first potato is sliced, then blade falls on wife's wrist. But wrist is untouched. What's the secret?

THE BOY AND THE RABBIT

by MARGOT HEGINBOTHOM

ILLUSTRATED BY RICHARD O. ROSE

"The flower is blue," the colonel told him, "cornflower blue." Timothy looked at him blankly. "Sort of blue bag blue like our mum uses?" he asked

Musts and mustn'ts, do's and don'ts: that's all you ever heard in the place. And rabbits—seven and six each!

TIMOTHY THOUGHT HE COULD hide the last three mouthfuls of semolina pudding beneath his spoon, but Miss Bates looked at him, and he had to clear his plate. Rebelliously, he gulped down the tasteless mixture, his throat aching and his eyes sore with unshed tears of indignation.

He was hungry—not for the wholesome food at Joshua Clayton's Home for Boys, but for "three penn'orth o' chips, and a bit o' tail," tasty and hot in a newspaper packet; for a slab of doughy jam tart, and a cup of strong sweet tea.

Five days at the Home had convinced him that life was now one weary round of *musts* and *must nots*. You must get up when the bell rang in the morning, you must not be late for breakfast, you must finish your porridge, you must not whistle in the classroom—so it went on until the evening, when you must clean your teeth, and you must not talk after the light was put out. Used to the freedom of a Huddersfield slum, he resented this new, disciplined régime.

Everyone was kind to him, but he had to do as he was told. In Huddersfield, mum had sworn at him, and sometimes knocked him about, but he had always done as he liked.

He longed uselessly for the warm comfort of mum's arms when she was in a good mood, and the longing increased his resentment.

In the playground after dinner he was still nursing it. Johnnie Cornish shouted to him above the din.

"Hi yer, Timothy! Come down to the sheds and help me clean out Archibald!" It was a generous suggestion, for Archibald was Johnnie's one and only rabbit, which had cost him weeks and weeks of pocket money, and usually he would share him with no one.

"Ah doan't want to clean out tha' mucky rabbit," Timothy shouted back ungraciously. "Ah'll be having me own rabbit soon enough." He knew this was not true. It would be months before he had saved seven shillings and sixpence.

Disconsolately he worried a stone out of the garden path with his toe, and kicked it along in front of him, telling himself he would not stand it, that he would arrange to get run over the next time they went for a walk, that he would run away and go to sea, or join the gipsies, or. . . . At that moment he saw the hole in the hedge. It was a small hole but Timothy knew he could wriggle through it easily.

"T'owd dafties," he said to himself. "T'owd dafties wi' their mun's and their munnots"; and within five seconds he was running across the meadow on the north side of Joshua Clayton's Home like some embryonic Olympic champion. There was a five-bar gate in the hedge opposite, and he clambered over it fearfully, convinced that someone would see him and raise the alarm.

In the next field the corn stubble scratched his legs viciously, but he would not slacken his pace, nor would he stop for a herd of large white cows, although he was very frightened. The geese by the farm frightened him, too, flapping their wings, stretching out their long necks and hissing. He hesitated—then he started to swear.

Unknown to Timothy, the farmer was watching him. He described the scene to his wife that evening: "Three foot and a 'alf 'e were, but the lang'age! I never 'eard such lang'age from a littl'un. He stood up to they old geese though. Charged through 'em sudden like, and they cackled off all over the field."

WHEN Timothy came to the stream a quarter of a mile beyond the farm he had to stop. Stitch gripped his side, and blood was oozing from a scratch on his leg. As far as he could tell no one was following him, so he sat down on the grass, and taking a very grubby handkerchief from his pocket, moistened it with his tongue and administered first-aid. Then he lay on his back and gazed up at the cloudless blue sky.

He could hear all the quiet sounds of the countryside—a grasshopper chirruping nearby, a lark singing, the water chattering as it flowed over the stones in the bed of the stream, a cock crowing in the distance.

Stepping stones led to the other bank, but Timothy preferred to paddle through the icy water, halting halfway to watch his toes which looked very white and an odd shape. It was good to be alive—better still to be alive and free.

"Yah! Yah! Yah!" he shouted exuberantly when he reached the other side; and he pranced about like a young colt. The grass was thick with rampion and scabious. Attracted by their colour, he plucked a handful, only to throw them down when he found a flower of a brighter blue, a blue that dazzled him.

"Coo!" he said to himself, and said it again as he picked the blossom, and stuck it proudly in his buttonhole.

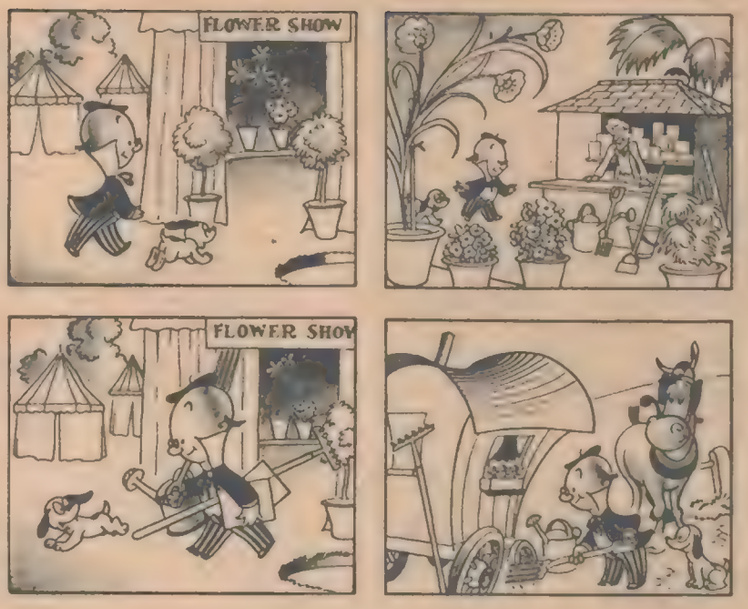
It dropped out five minutes later when he was picking blackberries. The bushes were heavy with fruit, and the berries stained his face and his hands, and the brambles scratched his leg and made it bleed again, but he did not mind. Exhilarated by the sun and air, he cared neither for yesterday, nor for tomorrow, and was intensely happy.

A red squirrel in Thomson's Copse, the first he had ever seen, made him whimper with excitement; and beyond the copse there were rabbits, twenty or more of them, playing in the sun. For a few seconds he watched them and then they suddenly took fright and disappeared with a flurry of white scuts. He wanted them to come back, and waited and waited. He forced himself to remain motionless while he counted up to a hundred, but when he reached ninety-five a jay screamed at him from the bushes, so he had to start all over again.

At last, growing bored, he was moving

MR. DIMPLE

by David Hand



onward when he saw a very small rabbit standing some twenty yards to his right. The little creature was petrified with fear, and he was able to get within five yards of it before it gave a sudden kick with its back legs and scuttled away.

Timothy gave chase, and pushed on for a hundred yards or more although the rabbit had disappeared. Finally he was brought to a halt by a five-strand barbed wire fence, and as he was wondering whether he should get over or through it he realized that he was not alone.

Someone was humming very badly, and interrupting the tune with a variety of grunts. It was a hymn Timothy knew, but he could not remember the words, and then suddenly they came to him:

"*Oft in danger* (grunt), *oft in woe* (hrr), *On*(hah)*ward Christians, onward* (hurr) *go* (grunt)."

No one was in sight, but the sound seemed to be coming to him through a thicket to his left. Curiosity stifled his desire to run away, so he skirted round its edge, and when he came to the barbed wire fence again he saw an elderly gentleman bent double and entangled in its meshes. Timothy wanted to laugh. He tried to suppress it, which was fatal, and ended by making so much noise that the old gentleman turned and saw him.

"Hey! Boy!" The voice had a commanding note in it which Timothy, who was a fugitive from authority if not from justice, did not like.

"Here, boy! Don't stand there gaping. Come and unhook me."

When the old gentleman could stand upright he proved to be short and stocky, and less frightening than he had seemed. He did not smile, but the eyes beneath the bushy white eyebrows were friendly.

"Thank you, son," he said. "Stupid thing to do wasn't it? If you hadn't come along then, this old coat would have had a three-inch tear in it, or I should have had a heart attack. What are you doing out here on your own?"

Timothy had not expected the direct question so quickly.

"Nowt," he said.

"Oh," said the old gentleman, as though it were a perfectly good answer. "I'm looking for plants."

Timothy felt some reply was necessary so said, "Arh." There was a long pause.

The child was painfully shy, and the old gentleman was realizing that the stretch of years between nine and sixty-nine was difficult to bridge. He tried again, asking the boy his name.

"Timothy Higgins."

"Mine's Keats. Colonel Keats."

"Arh," said Timothy. In the ensuing silence he wondered if he could double back around the thicket, and run off on his own once more.

The colonel hesitated. Should he give the child sixpence and say good afternoon? Or must he accept some responsibility for a waif who was miles from anywhere and doing "nowt"? He put his hand in his pocket, feeling for the rough edge of the coin, and then he looked again at the little figure in front of him.

TIMOTHY'S shirt was stained with blackberry juice. He had torn his trousers. His black hair was tousled and there was more blackberry juice on his cheek, and on his little snub nose. He looked up at the colonel with worried brown eyes, and the colonel let the coin drop back in his pocket.

"Have you had any tea?" he asked.

"Nay, but I 'ad some blackberries."

"You had better have some with me," said the colonel gruffly. He produced a packet of sandwiches, two buns in a paper bag, and a flask of tea from his rucksack. Timothy ate all the sandwiches except one, and both buns. They shared the tea, which was very strong and very sweet.

"I like it this way," said the colonel.

"Ay. It's champion," Timothy agreed.

Two magpies flew out of the bushes, and the colonel told Timothy what they were; Timothy told him about the rabbits and the squirrel. Conversation was becoming easier.

"That plant I'm looking for—the marsh gentian—has a blue flower," the colonel said.

"'Ow blue?" asked Timothy. The buns and the tea had refreshed him and he was beginning to like the colonel.

"The same colour as a cornflower."

Timothy looked at him blankly. "Would it be a sort of blue bag blue, like wot our mum used on washday?" he suggested.

"That's right." The colonel smiled.

"Eh. I stook a bit in me coat." Timothy glanced down hopefully at his buttonhole, and added in a crestfallen voice, "But it mun ha' dropped out."

HAVING had botanical help in the past from the inexperienced, the colonel was not optimistic. "Could you find the place where you picked the flower again?" he asked.

"Nay, I don't know. I might."

"Was it far away?"

"I doan't think so."

The colonel suggested that Timothy's family might be waiting for him, but the only reply he could get was, "Nay, it'll be all right," so he told the little boy to lead the way and he would follow. Actually Timothy trotted along at his side. The child had a good sense of direction and within half an hour they were nearing the stream.

"This is the place," said Timothy, running on ahead. He was eager now to find this blue flower with the funny name. "Like our mum's blue bag," he repeated to himself. "Like our mum's blue bag."

In the coolness of the evening the stream seemed to be flowing more swiftly. The grass was drenched with dew. Timothy stopped short. Unreasonably, he had expected to find the ground carpeted with the blue flower, and he was bitterly disappointed. When the colonel came up to him, he was running round in circles saying, "I can't find it. 'Twere here. I know 'twere here."

The colonel began to look, too, but more methodically, pacing to and fro. He stooped to pick a scabious.

"Was this what you found?" he asked.

"Nay. 'Twere blue. Ah nivver stook that wishy bit o' flower in my coat."

Five minutes later, when Timothy had given up hope, and was standing disconsolately on one foot, the colonel called out in excitement.

"Here it is. This is it. Several of them. I couldn't see for looking." Timothy ran quickly to him, and saw in the grass a plant with a long, silver-blue flower.

"Ah nivver found that," he said in a disappointed voice.

The colonel bent down again, and gently pressed back one of the petals, revealing the brilliant blue which Timothy remembered.

"The flower closes up in the evening," he explained. "That was why we couldn't find it."

"Cor," said Timothy with deep feeling.

By searching carefully they found twenty or more of the gentians. The colonel would only pick four of them, and would only allow Timothy to pick one. He talked about the preservation of wild flowers but Timothy was confused and did not understand. Fear was creeping into his mind. Soon the pale evening light would give way to darkness. Soon he would have to leave the colonel.

"I mun' be getting along now," he said in a small voice. In an effort to make it sound convincing he added, "They'll be worrytin' 'bout me."

"I'll give you a lift to the village," said the colonel. "My car's at the top of the hill."

"Nay, ah'm not goin' to t'village."

"Where are you going, son?" asked the colonel. Timothy did not reply, so he repeated the question.

"To 'Uddersfield," said Timothy miserably. Tired, cold and frightened, he was not far off tears. The colonel was beginning to understand the little boy.

"Eh, lad," he said. "D'ye cum' fra' 'Uddersfield. That's champion."

Timothy looked up at him. Perhaps he came from Huddersfield, too. He must come from Huddersfield to talk like that.

"D'ye know 'Uddersfield then?"

"I have been there," said the colonel, in his normal voice. "What are you doing down here?"

"Nowt," said Timothy.

"Look here, old man, you don't come all the way from Huddersfield to Sussex to do nowt."

There was silence for a minute.

"Nay, I don't know," began Timothy, and then, as the colonel seemed to understand, he told him the whole story. It was not very coherent. "Our mum" was the central figure. She had been killed in a train accident. Then there was "Our dad" who had been in hospital since Dunkirk, and "Our Mickey," who was at an approved school. Miss Bates came into it, too, with the semolina pudding; and there was Father Ricketts, from the church at Timothy's home, who became involved with the rabbits which cost seven shillings and sixpence.

As the child talked, they had made their way to the car. The colonel thought it might ease the situation if he chased a red herring, so he interjected: "Seven-and-six for a rabbit. Scandalous! It must be the Purchase Tax. Most unfair."

"Johnnie Cornish's got one," vouchsafed Timothy. "He calls it Archibald." They discussed Archibald until Timothy was safely inside the car and tucked up in a rug.

"Timothy," said the colonel.

"Yes," said Timothy.

"You know where I'm taking you, don't you?" The child made no reply.

"There's no alternative, son," said the colonel.

"I want to go to 'Uddersfield," said Timothy. "I doan't want to go back to t'home."

"You wouldn't be happy in Huddersfield now. You must face it, Timothy. Your mum isn't there, and your brother isn't there, and even the rooms you used to live in will have been let to someone else."

He let in the clutch and the car moved forward. "I'll see the headmaster, and make things right with him. I don't think you ran away. You just went for a walk." Timothy grinned. Within two minutes he was asleep.

When they neared the gates of the home the colonel started humming again. Headmasters had always frightened him, and he did not look forward to the coming interview, but he was determined that Timothy should not get into trouble. The child was not to be blamed. On that point he would be adamant.

The little maid who answered the door took no notice of the colonel and said cheerfully to Timothy: "Coo. You aren't half in for it. They've been looking for you." The colonel told her politely that her comments had not been invited, and asked her to take his card to the headmaster. A cheeky retort was on her lips, but glancing at the card she saw the name was followed by the letters V.C., D.S.O. "Yes, sir," she said meekly. "I'll go at once, sir."

Timothy was told to wait outside the headmaster's office. He sat on the edge of a hard chair, and as the door was ajar scraps of conversation reached him. He heard the colonel say that Higgins seemed an intelligent lad.

"Only been with us a few days," said the headmaster. "A very sad case."

LATER he heard them mention the blue flower. The headmaster said he had found it in Dorset as well and then the conversation bristled with Latin names which Timothy did not understand, so he lost interest. A chair scraped on the floor and he realized that the colonel was leaving.

"Oh, yes," he heard him say. "I forgot. About the rabbit."

"Rabbit?" queried the headmaster.

"Yes, rabbit," said the colonel testily. "Johnnie Cornish has one. He calls it Archibald or some such outlandish name. I want Timothy to have one, too. Seven-and-six I think they cost."

"I think I'll call my rabbit Keats," said Timothy to Miss Bates who was giving him his supper.

"After the poet, dear?" she said.

"Nay," said Timothy. "After t'colonel." He was eating lettuce with his bread and butter, and unobtrusively slipped a leaf into his pocket. "That's for Keats," he said to himself.

Miss Bates allowed him to undress by her gasfire, and he crept into the dormitory hoping everyone would be asleep. There was a muffled whisper from Johnnie Cornish's bed.

"Where you bin, Timothy?" he asked.

"For a walk," said Timothy.

"Garn," said Johnnie Cornish.

Speedway's Mr. Maximum

by RICHARD COLLIER

Speedway ace, Tommy Price, was practically cradled in the saddle. At nine he rode his own bike; at fourteen he entered his first race. His score now—9,000 races

AT WEMBLEY, where the final round of the first World Speedway Championship since the war takes place this month, they call him Mr. Maximum, because of his aptitude for piling up points in the National League. He is dark, volatile and thirty-eight years old, with nearly nine thousand races on the "cinders" behind him. The name is Tommy Price.

Things first started happening to Tommy in the saddle as long ago as 1919, when his father, a Cambridge engineer, built him a motor-bike of sorts from the spare parts in his workshop. Tommy recalls: "The old man had to hold me on it, but at least I knew how to handle it by the time I was nine."

Safer On Cinders

At fourteen, Tommy had an old A.J.S. that he bought for £15 and promptly entered at the St. Ives Grass Track Speedway. He won his first heat, came nowhere in the final, but decided that, in future, track racing would be infinitely safer than pleasure riding. This decision was influenced by the fact that he broke his leg on the same afternoon, cruising home over the wet roads.

Tommy continued to enter at meetings and was overjoyed one afternoon in 1935, when Frank Arthur, the Australian promoter, approached him at Barnet Grass Track Speedway and offered him a trial at Harringay.

"And incidentally," Arthur added, "are there any other lads down here that would be worth trying out?"

"Yes," said Tommy. "Young George Wilks. He's better than I am."

The Harringay management agreed with him wholeheartedly. Tommy led his first race for three laps, fell off his bike and was politely shown the door. Wilks, now riding with Tommy at Wembley, went on to win and was signed up on the spot.

After that it was only Tommy's love of racing for its own sake that kept him going at all, free-lancing all over the country wherever he could find a meeting. Equipment and travelling expenses were a heavy drain on his pocket.

During one race, at Luton, Tommy struck up a friendship with an Australian rider named George Hannaford. Hannaford, then a reserve rider for Wembley, fractured his skull during practice for the T.T. in the Isle of Man.

Tommy Fills The Breach

For a while after that, he rested up at Tommy's home, but it soon became evident that he would do no more riding for Wembley that year. Wembley's manager, Alec Jackson, asked Tommy to fill the breach.

The result was that Wembley signed Tommy on a fortnight later, and he has never left them since. When speedway was resumed after the war, it was Tommy, riding together with Bill Kitchen and George Wilks, who formed the basis of the team that carried off the League Championship and the London Cup. A year later, though exhausted with acute hay-fever, he still finished the season as one of the League's top six scorers.

Tommy Price: once his bike blew up as he crossed the finish line

Last year, with Kitchen and Wilks both on the sick list, Tommy took over the captaincy, and though ill-health and mechanical troubles bothered him all through the season, he led the team on to repeat their success of 1946.

But speedway riders never give up easily. One ace that Tommy knew, rode a race in spite of a broken rib and a punctured lung—and finished third.

Another, who broke his leg in a first-bend tumble, scrambled back on his bike and finished second. The tightly laced leathers held his leg together as a splint might have done.

"Pulling tricks out of the bag," or track tactics, call less, in Tommy's view, for brute strength, more for lightning judgment. The standard race-track is a quarter mile long and the average race lasts no more than four laps—so the seasoned rider has to think quickly.

If his rival hugs the white line, the only solution is to try and ride round him. "Crowding," as distinct from "boring," is quite legitimate. "Sliding" your machine round knowing at just what angle to put it into a broadside, in time becomes instinctive.

In many cases, the individual track is the most decisive factor in the entire race. Britain's thirty-five leading tracks have no standard construction laid down for them so that a rider like Tommy, who favours the freer "sliding" quality of cinders, finds that he has to alter his tactics and approach at every track on which he races.

West Ham, for instance, is made up of decomposed granite, much heavier than cinders, which allows the machines to "lie down" a little more. Bradford, on the other hand, Tommy's least favourite track, is banked steeply and topped with brick-dust, which can be treacherously slimy in wet weather.

When a rider feels himself falling, the golden rule is to try and fall inwards, away from the track. It is usually only when he loses control and can't that the accidents occur. Once, in a race at Belle Vue, Tommy was coming up fast behind Jack Parker when Parker's engine seized. Parker had insufficient warning to fall inwards, with the result that Tommy hit up against him and broke his nose against Parker's crash-helmet.

Bike's Performance Varies

On another occasion when a rider fell outwards, his principal opponent rode the last three laps without a foot-rest—his rival's head, in passing, had wiped it clean off the machine.

The biggest unknown quantity of all, in Tommy's view, is the performance of the machine during any given race. Tommy's machine, for instance, an Erskine Star Ride, takes a terrible beating during the six months of the season; once it even blew up on him as he crossed the finishing line.

The odd things that have happened during Tommy's time on the track are innumerable. Once the leading rider ran full tilt into a swarm of bees; no one was surprised that he finished the race a lap ahead of everyone else.

Another rider, taking a tumble before his fans, landed unhurt but realized with horror that his braces had broken. And another finished the race with a large and visible rent in the seat of his leathers. A few days later an ardent girl fan sent him a pair of sky-blue cami-knickers as a replacement.

Travelling expenses and wear-and-tear on his machine are the two major items of the enormous personal expense which a rider must inevitably incur. Tommy, who attends an average of three meetings per week, with six races to a meeting, reckons that on an all-the-year-round average, each meeting costs him £10 to £15.

What An Ace Earns

A new bike will cost him £200. A new engine will cost £75, a new frame (of which he has already had two this year) a further £80. Tyres, which average no more than eight meetings, are £2 10s. for each replacement.

But the return for all this expense can be considerable. A rider who is signed for a team, for instance, is guaranteed four starts at every meeting, with a fixed 35s. per start, win or lose, plus £2 for every point he gains. In six months of racing, some ace riders can make £5,000.

The boy who entered his first race at fourteen is now well up among the aces. He may yet be world champion.

JOHN BULL SERIAL by WINSTON GRAHAM

Night without stars

Just for a moment, my head swam. Was I mad, or was everyone else? I knew the café like the back of my hand. Now I was told it didn't exist, had never existed

I NEVER SAW THE SHELL that blinded me. I didn't see anything at all for a few weeks after it, and the first person I did see when they took the bandages off in the base hospital was Rachel, my fiancée.

It wasn't a particularly joyous recovery. My eye wasn't much good, and it was obvious I'd never see properly. So while I'd lain in bed, I'd thought up a little speech I intended trying out on Rachel—about how I couldn't burden her with a blind husband, and would release her from her promise, and so on.

That first look told me it wasn't necessary. Things didn't click between us any more, and at last the truth leaked out: she'd fallen for a lieutenant in the Navy.

So that was that. I went back to partnering in the solicitor's office. I played a bit of golf until my eye got worse again. Then I went to see Halliday, the surgeon. He hummed and hawed a bit, did the routine tests, then told me he wasn't satisfied. The operation had left a scar that was now tightening and pulling the pupil out of shape. It might never grow worse; on the other hand it might.

I began to get really fed up with things. My sight *was* getting worse. I tried to disguise it from people and from myself, but it was no good. And then I remembered the Wintertons, friends in Beaulieu, near Monte Carlo. I wrote to them, and they invited me to stay for the winter.

I went, passed a few leisurely weeks sunning, gossiping, drinking cocktails. Outwardly, everything seemed fine. I was just a gent who was a little short-sighted. Inwardly, it wasn't so good. I knew I was going blind, and it was doing queer things to me psychologically. I had to get away and be by myself for a bit.

I did just that. After a while, I landed up in Nice. I walked a lot, thought a lot, and got steadily more depressed. One day, I went to buy a new pair of shoes. Trying them on, I walked a few paces, then couldn't find the way back to my seat. I stumbled over a stool and went flat.

The girl serving me thought I'd fainted, and there was a minor panic, but at last I got out, somewhat shaken, and had a quiet drink at a café opposite. The fall seemed to settle it. There seemed nothing for it now but to wait for the guide dog and the white stick or—or end it all.

At this point, the girl from the shoe shop turned up. It was her lunch hour and she came and had a bite with me. She was an intriguing girl called Alix Delaisse (married, as it turned out) and I found myself making a date with her for Saturday night. All right, I told myself, nothing to lose: I'll stay alive till then.

Alix was certainly good for my morale. On Saturday, we talked and dined, and I began to see more of her and to learn more about her. Her husband, Jacques, was dead. He had been a Resistance leader. I also met a friend of hers (a very intimate friend, it seemed), one Pierre Grognard, to whom I took an instant dislike. He was a large, flashy type, owned three expensive restaurants, and hadn't been too uppish, rumour had it, about serving Germans during the Occupation.

The dislike was mutual. He lost little time in warning me that Alix was his "property." I didn't let it bother me.

One day, out sailing with Alix, we ran into a storm and made for Villefranche where Alix's mother-in-law, Mère Roget, ran the Café Gambetta.

It seemed that Alix had told the family about me, and I sensed a certain amount of hostility. I gathered that they wanted her to marry Pierre Grognard. I also learned that, oddly enough, he had been her dead husband's best friend, and a member of the same Resistance group.

However, after a few visits, I became friendly with them all. Alix's attitude was meanwhile becoming curiously strained, and one night she told me she would not be able to see me again. I saw her back to her apartment. We were both in a curious emotional state. If it was to be the last night, well. . . .

And then on the stairs we met Grognard—and that was the end of my dream. There was a row and I left.

Meanwhile, I was running short of money. John Chapel, the consul, an old friend, arranged a meeting with an exporter called McWheeler, who wanted legal work doing from time to time. Three days later, thinking the proposition over, I got a mysterious phone call.

It was from Alix—and she didn't want the person with her to know whom she was ringing. But I understood roughly what she wanted: she was at Grognard's flat, and she needed help.

I managed to get to the flat, and found the door open. No one was there. I groped around, found the furniture upturned, things smashed. Exploring the sofa, I found a man's hand. It was Grognard's; and he was dead.

PART IV

The Phone Rings

SHAKING from head to foot, I groped for a chair and sat on it and nearly vomited.

First thought was: get out of here. Put a distance between you and your companion on the settee.

But I was too shaken up for a minute, and by the time my legs were holding, other thoughts were cramming in. From somewhere I got the idea of a suicide pact. Perhaps because of me things had gone amiss between Alix and Pierre, and in his temperamental way he'd decided to finish them both. It fitted with Alix's attempt to tell me something while pretending to speak to someone else. Perhaps she thought I would be in time to stop it.

"Alix! Alix!" I shouted, getting up and beginning to grope about, dreading now that I should stumble across her body. I flung open the bedroom door and went in, switching on the light from habit, felt across the bed, beside the wardrobe, by the window, moving my feet like mine detectors across the floor.

"Alix! Alix!" I shouted, going into the kitchen, knocking over a chair, feeling about the floor. There was another door beyond, but that led out of the flat. I came back wiping the sweat. The silence was unbearable. Steady, steady! Think. The whole thing's got a perfectly natural explanation. Pierre and Alix were sitting smoking, listening to the radio; Pierre had a heart attack, died suddenly; Alix panicked, ran for a doctor. Any minute she'll be back. But why not phone for the doctor? And why that oblique call?

There was one way of finding out something more, but it wasn't the way I wanted to take. It's one thing to look at a dead body for signs of the cause of death; it's another to have to feel over it.

The telephone bell rang.

It was close beside me and jerked at my nerves. I felt for the phone; stop it at once. Another table, books, telephone. But if I answered it. . . .

Well, the thing couldn't go on ringing in that silent flat.

I took off the receiver.

"Yes?"

"Monsieur Grognard?" It was a man's voice.

"No," I said, and cleared my throat.

ILLUSTRATED BY K. J. PETTS

"Monsieur Grognard is not in just now."

"Oh. . . . Very well. I'll call him later."

"Who is it speaking, please?"

But the man had rung off. I put the receiver back.

My other cigarette had got lost long since. I took out a new one and lit it, standing there in the middle of the room, hoping it would steady my nerves. My voice must have sounded like a frog's. I'd got to think quickly, reason it out. Suppose something had happened between Alix and Pierre, they had quarrelled and Alix had left for good. Must get in touch with her. She would be back at her own flat. Ring now. But she had no phone in her own flat—it would mean her coming downstairs, talking in semi-public. Better to go round.

The cigarette was helping a bit; I thought, well, whatever else, Pierre can't hurt you now. It may be unpleasant, but it's only a superstition, an instinct. I went over to the settee, and by a touch here and there made out how he was lying.

He'd been sitting more or less straight with his head back when I got hold of his arm, and the pull had been enough to topple him over. Now he was lying on his face across the length of the settee and a jerk would probably overbalance him on to the floor. In spite of reason with a capital "R," that was something it seemed better to avoid.

I stubbed out the cigarette. His head was under my hand. Sleek black hair; I let my fingers travel over it: quickly took them away. The hair was sticky with something beside pomade: a deep wound along the top of the skull.

So not much examination needed. I wasn't specially grateful. I'd wanted some comfortable, reasonable solution to pull it all back to normal again; not this.

I turned and made for the outer door, in a sudden hurry now to be gone. As the door opened I realized I'd not got my stick.

Back again, groping on the floor about the settee. Not there. God only knew what had happened to it. In that first panic it might have been dropped in any of the three rooms.

I went back into the kitchen, then into the bedroom. The infuriating thing was that it might have come within an inch of one of my groping hands and still have been passed by.

A car went past outside, seemed to be stopping, accelerated away again with grating gears. That settled it: the stick would have to be left. I went out, pulling the outer door to behind me but not catching it. That was as it had been found.

The air was cool, even cold; in the flat it had been overheated, the electric fire burning away. I went down the steps with shaky knees, found myself in the quiet street. The breeze was like a tonic. I could think straight again. I began to walk down the street.

"Pardon me," I said. "It's Madame Delaisse on the third floor I want. I don't know the number."

"Number forty-two, m'sieu. All the doors are marked."

"Thank you. Unfortunately I'm too shortsighted to see the numbers. Would it be possible for someone to come up with me?"

"I will come up with you." She said it grudgingly, but I was thankful it wasn't the woman who'd shouted after me last week.

"Are you—Madame Colloni?"

"I am, m'sieu."

"Have you had any phone call from Madame Delaisse tonight?"

"No. Nothing at all."

We went up and she showed me the door. I thanked her and knocked but there was no reply. I knocked twice more and found a bell and rang that. Alix wasn't at home. She hadn't got back. I waited a quarter of an hour and then gave it up. It wasn't until I was nearly home that I realized what a corner I might be in myself.

Supposing Pierre hadn't fallen in the hearth or slipped from a ladder—in fact, supposing appearances were what they seemed—whom would the police be likely to suspect as a murderer? Surely a semi-blind Englishman who'd had a row with the murdered man a few days before, whose stick was found on the scene of the crime, who'd probably got bloodstained hands or bloodstained clothing—which might already have been noticed—and who had obligingly left fingerprints on practically every polished surface in the flat.

I got home and went up and mixed a stiff brandy. I needed it. I couldn't hold the glass steady.

Ought to have rung the police. As soon as I found Pierre I ought to have rung the police. Because of Alix I'd hardly thought of it. All the time I'd felt, she'll explain, she'll explain. Well, she hadn't. If she didn't ring or come soon. . . .

I went to bed about one. Through the night I kept thinking I heard the phone or someone knocking. Twice I dreamed Pierre Grognard was sitting in the chair by the bed waiting for me. I kept waking up in a sweat saying, "God! It's dark!" Then I'd rub at my eyes, trying to see.

It seemed unfair getting tangled up in a thing like this when I was at such a disadvantage. If Alix wanted my help I wanted to be there, not groping about in the darkness half a mile away. She might still be somewhere in the flat, dead like her fiancé. This was the worst thought of all. Once I nearly got up and went back to the flat to see if the door was still ajar, to see if there was still time to make another search.

It grew light at last, and I got up and had a bath and shaved. It was still early, but I couldn't rest, and picked up the receiver to try Pierre's flat. But I put the phone down again. By now almost certainly the police would be there. No point in tying myself up still more. Whatever had happened one ought to go slow. After all, my stick was not an unusual one, it carried no name or initials; the quarrel and the fingerprints might just not connect up.

Breakfast and the morning papers. It had all happened too late for these. Straight after the meal I went out, bought another stick and went round to the shoe shop.

She was not in her usual corner.

"Yes, monsieur? Can I help you?"

"I'm looking for Madame Delaisse."

"Our assistant? I'm sorry, Madame Delaisse is on holiday."

"Holiday? How long for?"

"I think it is ten days. It started from Wednesday, I know."

"She wasn't here yesterday?"

"No, monsieur."

"Oh. . . . Thank you."

Stand in the street for a minute in the sun. She hadn't been here yesterday.

I walked slowly across the town to her apartment. After trying the third floor and getting no answer I found Mme Colloni again.

She said, "No, m'sieu, Madame Delaisse is away."

"Oh, you've seen her since last night then?"

"No, m'sieu, she wrote to me. She has gone on a holiday."

"I should be very much obliged if you could tell me where she has gone."

"I don't know, m'sieu. She writes from Grasse."

"You mean the letter was posted from Grasse?"

"Of course."

"When you saw her last she didn't tell you she was going on a holiday?"

"Oh, I knew she was thinking of it. She has gone away to get married, you see."

"Married. . . ."

"Yes. She was a widow, you understand."

"Oh, yes, I know that."

The woman didn't say any more, but I couldn't leave it like that. I let her see that they were hundred-franc notes in my hand.

"Does she mention the name of her husband?"

"No, m'sieu."

"When was the letter posted in Grasse?"

"Yesterday afternoon."

"And it was delivered here this morning?"

"Yes, this morning."

I couldn't make the thing out at all. "If she should come back unexpectedly, would you ring me at this number? It's specially important. I'll make it worth doing."

"Very well, m'sieu. Thank you very much."

I went back to my room, waited till the afternoon and then sent out for the evening papers. Old Larosse read them to me. Because I couldn't tell him what to look for I had to sit patiently while he went through the French Government crisis and all the other stuff. He drew a complete blank.

I said: "But is there no local news? No murders, suicides, weddings or births to make it all more interesting?"

He chuckled and went on picking out bits; but it was perfectly plain by now that there was nothing about Grognard in the papers.

I waited in then until seven o'clock, hoping against hope for a message of some sort. *Had* she phoned last night? How could she have phoned if she was in Grasse? Had I mistaken the voice or the message? At seven I went out

and had a meal, then walked to the square where the buses start. One left at eight thirty for Cap Ferrat. This would do as it would pass through Villefranche.

I hadn't been to the Café Gambetta on my own, but it was easy enough to find. The bus stopped on the main road, and you went straight down towards the quay, took the second on the left and followed straight along till you came to the steps.

It had been a lovely day, though I hadn't been in a mood to appreciate it. Now in the evening a nightingale was beginning to warble. The scents were particularly clear: the hot sun had warmed the earth, and in the cool everything was fresh and fragrant. One could picture the harbour glimmering and glinting under the stars, the long curve of the bay, the mountains behind.

I went along pretty cautiously because Villefranche is a bit of a deathtrap for the non-seeing or the unwary. You're always coming to a step or two or a sudden dip in the cobbles or a sharp angle in the streets. It must have been about nine or just after when I walked up to the Café Gambetta. It was quieter than usual, and in the outer room there was only the usual four in the corner playing cards and two or three men at the bar.

"M'sieu?" said the boy behind the bar.

It didn't sound the usual voice.

"Is it François?" I said.

"No. My name is Raoul."

"You're new here, aren't you?"

"No, m'sieu. I've been here for some time."

"Is Mère Roget in?"

"Mère Roget, m'sieu? Who is she?"

The four in the corner had stopped playing. I put my hand gently on the bar.

"Go and tell Mère Roget that Giles Gordon wants to see her."

He sounded a bit puzzled. "But, m'sieu, I know no Mère Roget. You are mistaken."

I said: "Go and fetch Armand Delaisse, then. Ask him if his sister is here."

He said again, but in a more impatient tone: "You've made a mistake, m'sieu. No one of that name lives here. Can I get you something to drink?

I turned to the men playing cards.

"Isn't this the Café Gambetta?"

"No, m'sieu. This is the Café des Fourmis."

A couple of them said it together. Strange voices.

"This is the rue St. Agel?"

"No, m'sieu. The rue Carnot."

What a fool. To think yourself so clever getting here.

"I beg your pardon," I said. "I've mistaken the street."

I moved away from the bar. Even the floor seemed slightly familiar.

I said to the men at the table: "Could you direct me to the rue St. Agel. Is it the one below this?"

There was silence. Then one of them said: "I've never heard of the rue St. Agel, m'sieu. Is it in Villefranche?"

"It certainly is. The Café Gambetta is on the corner."

Another said: "I've lived in Villefranche all my life and never heard of either."

"Thank you very much." I turned into the street.

Just for a minute my heard swam. It all seemed so lunatic. That people shouldn't know of the Café Gambetta, people who were natives of the place. In a bit I should be asking if this was Villefranche.

They were lying—it couldn't be anything else. A clumsy device, and not hard to show up. I walked away a few yards, bit at the handle of my stick, then walked farther off, to the other end of the street. There I drew back against the wall and waited. When perhaps five minutes had passed I came out again and listened for the next passer-by.

Two women were coming up from the direction of the harbour. They were talking away at a great rate about the price of meat.

I said: "Forgive me, I'm short-sighted. Could you tell me the name of this street?"

They stopped in mid-spate. One said: "Rue Carnot, m'sieu."

That shook me up.

"And that café down there on the corner?"

"The Café des Fourmis."

I said: "Could you please tell me, then, where the rue St. Agel is?"

"Rue St. Agel? In Villefranche? Do you know it, Netta?"

"I've never heard of it."

"Or the Café Gambetta?" I said.

"No, m'sieu. Are you sure it is in Villefranche?"

"It is owned by Mère Roget."

"No, m'sieu. I'm sorry. We don't know that at all."

They went on.

JOHN said: "And when did all this happen?"

"A couple of days ago."

"What did you do then?"

"Not very much. What was there to do? I hung about at the end of the street for a time and then went down to the quay to see if there was any sign of Roquefort. That was a fisherman who'd been specially friendly at the Gambetta. But nobody seemed to have heard of him, so in the end I came home. Yesterday I stayed in most of the day. I felt pretty queer; especially as Larosse hasn't been able to find anything about it in the papers."

"No, there's certainly been no mention of Grognard." John relit his pipe. "I'm hanged if I know what to make of it, Giles. If it was anybody but you I'd think. . . ." He paused. "Of course, not being able to see. . . ."

"I know. It makes every statement suspect, doesn't it?"

"I wouldn't go as far as that. But there might be a flaw somewhere in the story which isn't detectable to *me* because I have only your account, and which isn't detectable to *you* because. . . . For instance, are you sure this man you found was dead?"

"Certain."

"And are you sure it was Grognard's flat you went to? You say you'd only been once before."

"It was the one I'd been to before."

John grunted. "There's one possibility—I don't know if it's occurred to you, but it's one that ought to be considered. That is, that there's been an attempt to frame you."

"It had occurred to me."

"You could be in rather a spot, you know."

"I know that."

"Were you invited there for that special purpose? A murder was planned, and someone imitated this girl's voice. You obligingly went along and stuck fingerprints all over the walls. What more could they want?"

"Nothing at all."

"As for the girl, on the face of it, I agree, it's not very likely that she should have anything to do with the murder. . . ."

"I've been meeting Alix for nearly two months. However blind one may be—and I mean the other sort of blind—one does get to know a bit about a woman in that time."

He was still unconvinced. "This Villefranche business is all in keeping, too."

I said: "You know those jigsaws where you pick up a piece that looks exactly right for a particular hole, but when you try to put it in, it just doesn't fit. That's the sort of piece you've got hold of now."

"Well, where is the right piece?"

"I wish to God I knew."

He was silent for a bit. I could tell that his brain was going all round the thing.

"Anyway we agree that if that body is found you're in a nasty jam."

"Yes."

"There's one thing I'd certainly advise you to do here and now."

"What?"

"Get out."

"The criminal flees from his crime."

"Right enough. But you'll be a lot safer in England, all the same. There's a plane leaves Nice every day. You could be in England tomorrow."

I shook my head.

"We all ask advice and then don't take it. How should I ever settle down at home with this thing turning over in my head?"

"Go away and come back in a month if the coast's clear. I'll keep you up to date."

"I *can't*, Johnny. Not at this stage. I feel I ought to go to the police."

"Over my dead body. Sorry! Perhaps that's the wrong simile. But can you imagine telling the story you've told me to a commissaire or a *juge de paix*?"

"If I hang on for a day or two, can you make any inquiries for me?"

"I'll do what I can, of course. In a private capacity, that is. I'll check up."

THERE wasn't anything in the papers the next day. I stayed in most of the day, trying to forget the sort of frame-up John had suggested. In the afternoon I went to sleep, tired out with thinking, and woke up full of discontent and anxiety. If Alix was still alive, why hadn't she let me know something somehow? Either she was dead or. . . . I felt surrounded with lies and deceit, and no means of telling where the truth ended and the falseness began.

That evening I went round to the Chapels again.

John said: "I've told Kay. I hope you don't mind."

"Of course not."

"We haven't found much. First, the easy thing: Pierre Grognard lives at the address you visited. Second, Kay went round there this afternoon; the door of the flat was locked and no one answered the bell."

"It's been found, then."

"By someone. Third, I rang up his restaurant here and was told he'd gone away for a fortnight. Fourth, there's no café called the Café Gambetta in Villefranche. That's all we've done."

"Thank you. You've helped a lot. Did you by any chance ring his flat?"

"No."

"I did this morning. There wasn't any answer. D'you mind if I try again now?"

"Go ahead."

I got the number and heard it ringing. For a second I had the queer feeling that I was back there at the other end of the telephone in that silent room with the electric fire still burning. And Pierre Grognard still lay face downwards on the settee. The broken flower vase was at my feet and the carnations were crushed and fading. . . .

There was no reply. I hung up.

"Now what?"

John said: "Look, Giles. Old McWheeler will be back here next Wednesday. Meet him again and go back with him to England. Once you're there you'll more or less be out of danger, and anyway you'll have time to think the whole thing over in perspective. Then if you still feel you want to come back here you can talk business with him. In the meantime I can keep in touch with things and let you know. Obviously if Grognard doesn't turn up in a fortnight there'll be a hue and cry. That's the time for you to be absent."

I said: "Do you know more than you're telling me?"

"No. . . . Far from it. My advice to any British subject I saw drifting into a mess would be the same: cut it out and go home. Even more so when it's an old friend. The other and more particular reason is to do with this place and time. A country can't be occupied and practically at civil war within itself and get over it in two or three years. Think what London must have been like two years after Cromwell died. . . . Well, now, this thing you're concerned in may be just another eternal triangle. But there's a strong chance that its origins lie somewhere in the occupation. That might be dangerous. In any case, you're better out of it, far better. Believe me."

"I grant you all that."

"But you won't go?"

"No."

Kay said, "Do you think Charles Bénat could help us?"

"Um. . . . It's an idea. He's got a finger in every pie."

I said, "The fellow I met that evening with you?"

"Yes. He's one of the most brilliant men of his generation. He was in the Resistance, too; one of the leaders. What he doesn't know about things in this area isn't worth knowing. Anyway he could advise you."

I said: "I had thought of going to the police and telling them half the story—that Alix Delaisse had disappeared and I was anxious to trace her. It might set them off."

"Until we know what's been found in Grognard's flat I shouldn't go *near* the police. I mean that, Giles."

There was a minute's silence.

"Where does this lawyer friend of yours live?" I asked.

"In the boulevard Normandie. But he's got a terrific practice; he's quite likely to be in Paris or Marseilles."

"Why don't you ring him?" Kay suggested. "Ask him round."

Johnny said: "I doubt if he'd come. But I'll ring him in the morning. Maybe you could go to his place."

It seemed pretty hopeless, but, "All right," I said. "Thanks. I feel a dead loss by myself. So long as there's something moving. . . ."

ABOUT eleven next day John phoned me. "There's still nothing in the papers, old boy."

"No."

"Well, I rang Bénat's office this morning. But he's spending the weekend at his villa above Vence, so I rang him there. He was very nice about it—of course I only hinted at the business—but anyway he suggested you could go up there on Sunday morning. He's leaving for Toulon on Monday, so it seemed the best thing to do."

"Thanks very much. I suppose it's worth trying. You're not coming with me?"

"I think you'll be better on your own. Two lawyers together, as it were. You talk the same language."

"How do I get there?"

"It's almost impossible except by car. I've got to go to Cagnes on Sunday morning, so I thought I'd run you as far as that and book a taxi to take you the rest of the way."

"Very good of you. What time?"

"Call for you around ten."

"Thanks," I said again, "that'll suit me very well."

But as I hung up the receiver it seemed a forlorn hope. The knowledgeable lawyer with his dry, dry wisdom—didn't I know the type! No doubt he'd give advice which was sound enough in principle: the outsider's view of the case.

In the old days at home when I was just feeling my way in law, I'd been at such interviews between old Hampden and a client, when old Hampden had said exactly the right thing from a legal point of view and I'd seen the client struggling vainly to convey to him all the subtle nuances that were known only to the man who saw the case from within.

Well, I didn't fancy myself in that position. But the interview was arranged, and perhaps it would turn out better than one feared. In the meantime there was all Saturday to go through. Perhaps it would bring something to give us a new light on things.

There was still no mention of Grognard in the papers. It rained heavily Saturday night but was fine enough Sunday morning, and the sun was breaking through as I tried to fold myself into John's midget car.

He said: "I wonder what it feels like being as tall as you. I'm sure it doesn't serve any useful purpose."

I said: "It serves the purpose of keeping the species endlessly variable. Does this door shut?"

"Only when the hinges are free of clothing. Let me."

I was grateful for his cheerful talk on the way to Cagnes. He'd never been able to stop talking at school, and it had got him into endless trouble. As I sat there listening to him I could fancy the years had never happened and the war had never happened and that everything was as it had once been.

I should have been glad enough to see this morning after I said goodbye to him and got into the taxi, because, although I'd never been to Vence, I knew it was well up in the foothills with the mountains rising sharply behind it, and the views would be fine.

In Vence, Maurice, the taxi-driver, stopped to ask the way. Then we branched off and began to climb again. I sat in the front seat with him, and he talked as much as John, and smoked incessantly.

I said: "Is this one of those roads on the edge of a precipice?"

"More or less, m'sieu. There is a fall but it is not a very big one. The road winds up the valley, you see. I have never been this way before. On the other road the bridge was blown by the Boches, but I'm told they have put a trestle bridge across."

We took two double hairpin bends that destroyed my sense of direction entirely. I said: "I often wonder they don't build bigger parapets."

He blew a cloud of cigarette smoke over me. "Oh, there is very little traffic up

"Is it so unusual to be let down by a woman?" Bénat said. "Don't tell me you still have illusions, Mr. Gordon"

here. A bicycle or two. The corners are nothing. Of course I have never been this way before." We swung carelessly round again and back, and then began to drop slightly for a change.

"Do you know when we are there, m'sieu? I wonder if that is it?"

"What?"

"There is a villa of some sort on the other side of the valley. It is the only house to be seen."

"No. I haven't been before."

The road deteriorated now, and for a few restful moments Maurice slowed down while we bumped over it.

"They are repairing the road," he said. "And not before time. The rain has brought down a lot of loose stones from above. They will find extra work when they come in the morning."

After a bit we came to a stop.

"What's the matter?"

"A fork. There has been a signpost but it has been broken off. No doubt the Maquis did it."

"I should make for the villa."

"It has disappeared. But I should think if we take the left fork. . . ."

He swivelled the car round and started off. "Ah, there it is." He blew smoke all over me again. "We shall soon be there now. If it is the wrong villa we can at least inquire the way."

But it was the right villa. Charles Bénat had seen us coming and was waiting on the steps, a big dog at his side.

"You say the trouble's right here inside, Madam?"

BÉNAT's hands were slim and long, a bit like a woman's; the grip firm but disinterested.

I said: "I've heard a good deal of your beautiful house. Sorry I'm not able to appreciate it."

"Oh, this. A fancy for Renaissance furniture; what else is there to do with one's money? Can I get you something to drink? Quiet, Grutli. The gentleman has come to stay."

In the theatre there's a technique called "throw away"; that's how Charles Bénat talked: quickly but casually, deprecatingly, off-hand. He discarded his thoughts, throwing them like a bone to the dog.

"This is English gin, of course. French gin is outrageous. You haven't been here before? One can see Corsica on a fine day. Not that there's any special pleasure in detecting a smudge on the horizon. Why do people suppose that there is?"

"I expect the general view is very good."

"Agreeable. You can see across the nearer valleys to the green hills which stretch down to the sea. I like generosity in nature because it's so rare in one's friends."

We were in a large room. The chair I was in was of studded leather, shaped like a Doge's chair. From the way the light fell I gathered that the window was tall and narrow and latticed, running from floor to ceiling.

The dog, a Great Dane, crouched on the floor, watching me suspiciously. Every now and then he would shift round and shake himself.

"This is an old house?"

"No. Oh, no. It was built in the twenties by a rich industrialist from Lille — in the forties he sided with the decrepit Marshal. When he was shot a grateful country gave me the first refusal of his property—charging me not more than three times what it cost to build. You'll stay to lunch, of course."

I said I'd half-promised to meet John in Cagnes at one.

"You should have brought Mr. Chapel. I like him, even though one feels there's something retarded about him, as if he's never quite grown up. Anyway, he can go home without you. A promise has become a convention no one takes seriously these days. I have American cigarettes but not English. Or do you prefer your own?"

We talked for a bit, not getting anywhere particular; and then Bénat broke off almost in midstream and said: "But we aren't here to discuss my affairs, are we? I understand you've been getting into trouble, Mr. Gordon. I hope I can help. It won't be the first time I've helped one of your countrymen. The last one was a parachutist who misguidedly landed near St. Jeannet."

I said: "You'll think I'm wasting your time."

"That, of course, remains to be seen."

And then he was silent. A few minutes ago I'd wondered when he gave his clients room to talk. But now he completely dried up. I couldn't see him, so could only suppose he was still listening. I said: "Perhaps you know Pierre Grognard."

"I do indeed. We worked for the same cause during the Occupation."

So that much was true.

"And a young woman called Alix Delaisse."

"I know her by sight. Her husband was also under me in the Resistance movement. He lost his life."

"Yes, I know." I went on, not telling the story very well. I told him about finding the body and what had happened. He didn't speak. The only sound was the occasional movement of the dog. It's hard going through a longish story when you've no guide to the attitude of your listener, can't see the expression in his eyes or judge by a smile or a frown whether he's interested or bored.

When I'd finished he got up. "Let me fill your glass."

"Thanks."

He came over, fiddled about at the table before sitting down. He had a slight limp, I thought.

He asked exactly the same question John had asked. "Are you sure the man was dead?"

"Quite sure."

"How?"

"By the feel of his hands and face."

"They were cold?"

"No, but cooling." There was a pause, and then he asked: "When did this happen?"

"Last Wednesday."

"Supposing the man was dead, what makes you sure it was Pierre Grognard?"

"That's a——" I stopped.

"Have you ever seen Grognard?"

"Obviously not."

"But it was his flat?"

I said: "It was his flat, it was his hair-oil, his type of hands."

"Yes, well, I'm afraid you're mistaken, Mr. Gordon. It was not Pierre."

"What makes you so sure?"

"Because I've seen him since."

"Since Wednesday?"

"I saw him on Friday in Grasse."

I frowned. "Good God!"

"Yes, it's very strange."

"Was he——all right?"

"He seemed very well. I only exchanged a few words with him because I had an appointment at the Mairie."

"What was he doing in Grasse?"

"He'd gone up there for his marriage. He was to be married yesterday, and then they were leaving to spend their honeymoon in Paris."

"They?" I said.

"Yes, he and his new wife. You knew her as Alix Delaisse."

There was a smell of lavender in the room. I think Bénat had gone across to a vase and broken a bit of flower off to stick in his coat.

I said dully: "But why Grasse?"

"I don't understand."

"Why did they go to Grasse to get married?"

"It was his home town. His parents lived there. Yes, Grutli, you may go out if you want to."

"But whose was the body I found in his flat on Wednesday evening?"

"That remains to be seen. I'm afraid I'm not very satisfied about it, Mr. Gordon. With your disability. . . ."

I laughed briefly. "You think the body wasn't there or that the body wasn't—dead."

"I don't in the least doubt the evidence of the senses you still have. But there are one or two possible explanations. . . ."

"I'd be glad to hear them."

HE said slowly: "Well, I know Pierre Grognard better than you. He has a malicious sense of humour. During the Occupation he played at least one practical joke on Darnand's men which was a classic of its kind. That sort of thing grows on one. You'd quarrelled with him. It's not impossible that this was some elaborate joke. Perhaps it misfired; perhaps you were expected to ring up the police."

"And you think Alix Delaisse would join in it?"

He shrugged his shoulders. "You know the lady better than I do."

"And the café in Villefranche."

"Again——you know the lady better than I do."

"And if I'm convinced the man was dead?"

"That's up to you, what you believe. I can give you the address of Pierre's servant if you choose, and you can go to the flat together."

There was silence. I said: "How long will they be away?""

"I don't know that. You could find out at any of Pierre's restaurants. I think he said a month."

Irrespective of anything that had happened on Wednesday night, it was hard to believe that Alix had gone off without a word. What I felt may have shown in my face, because he came across and touched my shoulder.

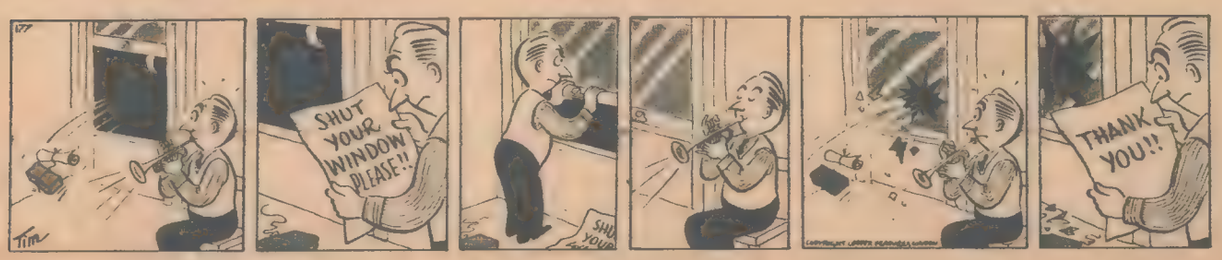
"Is it so unusual to be let down by a woman? Don't tell me you still have illusions, Mr. Gordon."

"It seems to me," I said dryly, "that I have practically nothing else."

He laughed. "Oh, those are different."

"Are they?" It didn't strike me as

OH, JOHNNY! by TIM



so funny. He went on, imperturbably: "So I should have thought. What did Mr. Chapel advise you to do?"

"Very much what I think you will."

"You mean—go home? . . . Well, it's the obvious thing, isn't it? You're not really in a condition. . . . After all, whether this thing was a hoax or not isn't really the point."

"What is, then?"

"I should say the lady in the case."

"You're dead right."

"That being so, there's still less you can do at this stage. Trying to interrupt a honeymoon — that would make you popular with no one. If I were you I should swallow my pride and go home for a year or so. Then, if you still feel like it, come back and take aim at the lady. She might welcome you. On the law of averages she will. It's really much more fun that way if one can bring it off, because one represents romance with none of the tiresome obligations."

I said, "You take a poor view of human nature."

I stayed to lunch. We had it in a low, cool room with a tiled floor and pot palms which made a graceful, rustling sound by the open windows. The meal was caviare, plovers' eggs, a side of pork, fresh strawberries and ice-cream, Arabian coffee. The wines and liqueurs were in keeping.

I said, "Do you live here quite by yourself?"

"Except for Grutli, yes. Why not? I'm away a lot, bothering with other people's troubles. When I come back here I like to relax."

"You haven't married?"

"My God, I have not."

"Preferring, I suppose, the romance without the tiresome obligations."

"Women are all right in their place—and their place is pleasure. One enjoys good wine and good food, but who'd think of marrying them!"

I said, "Food and wine as good as this are almost worth it."

"The old man from Lille laid in a good cellar. But then he was a Catholic and believed in the mortification of the flesh."

"You aren't fond of the Catholics?"

"How could I be? I was brought up one." The manservant filled new glasses.

I said: "Perhaps the Communists have your sympathy."

I think Bénat smiled. "You want to be knowing, don't you? If it's of interest, they haven't. . . . People join the Communist Party now for much the same reason they joined the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, because they are afraid. If they're stupid it's fear of intimidation. If they're intelligent it's fear of facing up to the spiritual consequences of standing alone. Down, Grutli. You may not move till we do."

"An individualist, then."

"I should use the word anarchist if it hadn't the wrong associations. Anarch is a bit better perhaps—it's the same word in English, isn't it? The Anarch is surely a man who considers that all dogma exists only to be challenged and who admits no moral law beyond his own need—who's prepared to act alone and think alone and has the courage to face his own inevitable despair. More coffee?"

"No, thank you."

"Good coffee's still hard to get. This came from Baghdad. The idea of an anarchist as a man of violence is rather silly. He need not be at all. The Anarch would kill only those who interfered irremovably with his own peace of mind—as the Italians and the Germans did with mine during the war."

I said, smiling, "You despise the law but live very well out of it."

"You're a lawyer yourself. Don't we all do that?"

"Not to the extent of taking it into our own hands."

"Oh, well, that was a little rhetorical. Most Frenchmen are inclined to be rhetorical as most Englishmen are inclined to be literal. Naturally I don't advise a client to go and shoot his neighbour just because he disagrees with him.

"This hasn't been a pleasant experience for you, I can see. Being duped seldom is. Fortunately most of the human race never realize their blindness. . . . I beg your pardon. That wasn't a very good remark."

"Well . . . thanks for bearing with me."

"I've enjoyed it. Come and see me again if you're in this district."

"I will." But I wasn't sure whether he meant it, because he suddenly sounded flat and casual. He came to the door with me, but reluctantly, as if he'd lost interest.

Before I could go more than a few paces Bénat had moved away and was talking to his dog.

Quite suddenly, I thought of another man who could sit as quietly as Bénat. Was it, I wondered, just coincidence? That had been in the Café Gambetta.

To be continued next week

THE HUMAN MACHINE

Inventing Time

THERE are roughly two sorts of people in the world. One lot finds there is too much time. The other finds there is too little.

Well, idle and resourceless folk can be left to their boredom. No one need be sorry for them.

But people who complain that there is not sufficient time and that there aren't enough hours in the day should invent some more.

"Invented" time can be invaluable. All you have to do is to employ those odd minutes every day that can so easily be wasted if you don't seize them before they pass. There's always the odd job to be done, if it's only driving in a nail or dusting a corner.

You don't need to idle in order to relax. All you need is to do something different.

by ***ROFFE THOMPSON***

NOW YOU KNOW

by BERNARD GEIS

"TOO TIRED TO SLEEP" is one old saying that has not been discredited by modern science. But it applies almost exclusively to brain workers.

After long hours of concentration on intellectual work, the accumulation of fatigue "toxins" is so great that it is impossible to relax.

The solution is to "taper off." In other words, instead of going to bed at once, take a stroll down the street, or listen to some music on the radio for a while, or play a couple of games of solitaire. And drink something soothingly warm, preferably broth or milk.

★ Anne Shelton ★

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A big reward for a little trouble—pickles and chutneys in variety to tickle fickle appetites and lift meals right out of the ordinary. And how economical to make your own!

POINTS TO WATCH: 1. Use aluminium or unchipped enamel pans. 2. Use any type of jar, but first wash in hot water. Metal tops should be protected from vinegar by a layer of melted wax or several thicknesses, of greaseproof paper under the lid. Paper tops should have a rag dipped in melted wax or fat tied over them to prevent evaporation.

SPICED VINEGAR

Most pickles are made with cold spiced vinegar. This improves with keeping, is all the better made in advance, ready to use as the various vegetables come into season.

1 oz. mixed pickling spices (3 level tablespoons) to each quart of vinegar. Or ¾ oz. each of cinnamon bark, cloves, whole allspice and mace, a few peppercorns or a pinch of cayenne pepper. These proportions can be varied to suit yourself.

Bring spices and vinegar to boiling-point in covered pan. Allow to stand 2 hours without further heating. Strain and use cold.

MIXED VEGETABLE PICKLE

Suitable vegetables are cauliflower, cucumber, French beans, onions, marrow. Prepare vegetables and cut in suitable sized pieces. Sprinkle with salt and leave to stand for 48 hours. Wash, drain very thoroughly, pack into bottles leaving room for at least ½ inch of vinegar on top. Cover with cold spiced vinegar and seal.

RED CABBAGE PICKLE

Remove discoloured outer leaves from firm red cabbage. Wash well and cut cabbage into shreds. Place in layers in a basin, sprinkling household salt between each layer. Leave 24 hours.

Drain thoroughly and pack into jars. Cover with cold spiced vinegar and seal. This pickle should be used within about two months, as after that, it tends to soften.

GREEN TOMATO CHUTNEY

1 lb. onions, minced or chopped, 5 lb. tomatoes, minced or chopped, ½ level teaspoon salt, ½-1 level teaspoon pickling spices, ¾-1 pint vinegar, 1 lb. sugar.

Cook onion in very little water for about 20 minutes in covered pan. Add tomatoes, salt and spices (tied in muslin). Cook until ingredients are quite tender (about another ½ hour). It may be necessary to add a little vinegar during cooking to prevent burning. Then add sugar and rest of vinegar, stir well and continue boiling gently with lid off until chutney has the consistency of jam and no liquid vinegar remains. Remove muslin of spices. Bottle and seal.

PICKLED ONIONS

Small ones can be pickled whole, large ones cut in slices. Remove the outer skin, using a stainless steel knife to prevent onions turning black.

Soak in the brine for 48 hours, made by dissolving 4 level tablespoons household salt in 1 pint water for every 1 lb. onions. Drain from the brine, rinse in cold water and drain thoroughly. Put into jars, leaving room for at least half an inch of vinegar on top; cover with cold spiced vinegar and seal.

"THE A.B.C. OF PRESERVING"

This 44-page book, price 6d., tells you all you want to know about making pickles, chutneys, bottling fruit and tomatoes, and jam-making. Obtainable through your usual bookstall or shop, or 7d. post free from H.M. Stationery Office, P.O. Box 569, London, S.E.1.

ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF FOOD

"Contrary to legend, France had more—and bigger—tanks than Germany when war came." The High Command did not know how to use them

The German Army enters Poland. Though not "really efficient and modernly designed," it did recognize new theory of high-speed warfare

THE GREAT ILLUSIONS OF 1939

by Capt. B. H. LIDDELL HART

Continued from page 8

collectively to operate as such—longer even than had been reckoned by the German Command, which was much alarmed at the slowness of the process.

The plain fact is that the German Army was not ready for war in 1939—a war which its leaders did not expect, relying on Hitler's assurances.

They had consented unwillingly to Hitler's desire to expand the army quickly, as they preferred a gradual process of building up thoroughly trained cadres, but Hitler had repeatedly told them that there would be plenty of time for such training, as he had no intention of risking a major war before 1944 at the earliest. Equipment, too, was still very short compared with the scale of the army.

It is one of the great illusions of the war that Germany's sweeping victories in the early stages were due to an overwhelming superiority of weapons, as well as of numbers. It arose as a consequence of those victories but is as misleading as the earlier illusion about the power and efficiency of the French and Polish armies—though not so dangerously misleading as that proved to be.

Germany Had No Heavy Tanks

The later illusion, of Germany's superior weight, is slow to fade. Even in the latest volume of his war memoirs, Churchill speaks of the Germans as having at least a thousand "heavy tanks" in 1940.

The fact is that they had then no heavy tanks at all.

At the start of the war they had only a small number of medium tanks, weighing barely twenty tons. Most of the tanks they used in Poland were of very light weight and thin armour.

When we cast up the balance sheet, it can be seen that the Poles and French together had the equivalent of 130 divisions against a German total of ninety-eight divisions, of which thirty-six were virtually untrained and unorganized. In numbers of "trained soldiers" the balance against the Germans was much larger still.

What could be weighed against this adverse numerical balance was that the weightier combination was widely separated—divided into two parts by Germany's central position. The Germans were able to attack the weaker of the two partners, while the French had to attack the Germans' prepared defence if they were to bring relief to their ally.

Even so, on a quantitative reckoning, the Poles had *large enough* forces to hold up the German striking force that was launched against them—which consisted of forty-eight active divisions. These were followed up in the first place by some half dozen of the reserve divisions that were mobilized, but the campaign ended before they came into action.

On the surface, it would also appear that the French had ample superiority to crush the German forces in the west, and break through to the Rhine. The German generals were astonished, and relieved, that they did not do so. For most of them still tended to think in old terms, while overrating the French Army as much as Churchill did.

But the problem whether Poland could have held out, and France been more effective in helping her, looks very different when examined more closely—with a clearer understanding of the inherent handicaps and of the new technique of warfare that was first put into practice in 1939. From this "modern" viewpoint it seemed impossible, even before the event, that the Poles could hold out or the French break through to their relief.

That was why I was led to make the prewar forecast quoted earlier—which appeared to the "statesmen" so unduly pessimistic, and so contrary to the figures of numerical strength. For I had been expounding this new technique during the past twenty years, and trying to shake people out of the old way of thought, and the habit of reckoning military strength in terms of "rifles and sabres."

During the last few years I had been thinking out the counter to the new method—as that was clearly the prime need of countries that would have to meet attack—but it had proved as difficult to get the antidote developed as to get the power of the new "offensive injection" recognized here.

Describing the collapse of Poland in his memoirs, Churchill says: "Neither in France nor in Britain had there been any effective comprehension of the consequences of the new fact that armoured vehicles could be made capable of withstanding artillery fire, and could advance a hundred miles a day."

What Churchill Didn't Mention

That statement is only too true, in so far as it applies to the bulk of the senior soldiers and statesmen of both countries. But he fails to mention that it was in Britain, first of all, that these new potentialities had been visualized and explained, publicly and unceasingly, by a small band of progressive military thinkers.

In his latest volume, dealing with the collapse of France in 1940, Churchill makes the notable, if qualified, admission: "Not having had access to official information for so many years, I did not comprehend the violence of the revolution effected since the last war by the incursion of a mass of fast-moving heavy armour. I knew about it, but it had not altered my inward convictions as it should have done."

It is an extraordinary confession, coming from the man who had played so great a part in sponsoring the tank in the first World War. The admission is honourable in its frankness, but the initial excuse is weak. For he had been Chancellor of the Exchequer up to 1929, while our Experimental Armoured Force, the first in the world, had been formed in 1927 to try out the new theories which the exponents of high-speed tank warfare had been preaching for several years before that. He was fully acquainted with their ideas, and had visited the Experimental Force at work. Even after leaving the Government, he always seemed to have a remarkable degree of "access to official information."

In any case this was not of great importance, since backward ideas prevailed in the higher official circles in the War Office. But during these later years Churchill frequently had talks with the exponents of the fast-tank idea, at any rate with General Fuller and myself, besides having read what we had written.

Lack of comprehension of the new idea of warfare, and official resistance to it, was even greater in France than in England. And greater in Poland than in France. That incomprehension was the root of the failure of both armies in 1939, and of the French again, more disastrously, in 1940.

The Poles were antiquated in their ruling military ideas, and also to a large extent in the pattern of their forces. They still pinned their trust to the value of a large mass of horsed cavalry, and cherished a pathetic belief in the possibility of carrying out cavalry charges.

Old-fashioned Ideas At Top

The French, on the other hand, had many of the ingredients of an up-to-date army, but they had not organized them into such—because their military ideas at the top were twenty years out of date. Contrary to the legends that arose after their defeat, they had more tanks than the Germans had built by the time the war came—while a large proportion of their tanks were bigger and more thickly armoured than any of the German tanks, though not quite so fast.

But the French High Command still regarded tanks through 1918 eyes—as servants of the infantry, or else as reconnaissance troops to supplement cavalry. Under the spell of this old-fashioned way of thought they had delayed organizing their tanks in armoured divisions—as the Germans

WHO ARE THE FELLOW TRAVELLERS?

A sensational and revealing article by Douglas Hyde, ex-news editor of the *Daily Worker*, appears . . .

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

had done, and were still inclined to employ them in petty packets.

The weakness of the French, and still more the Poles, in new-style ground forces was made all the worse by their lack of air power to cover and support their armies.

With the Poles that was due partly to lack of manufacturing resources, but the French had no such excuse. In both cases the needs of air power had been subordinated to the building up of large-size armies—because the voice of the generals was dominant in the distribution of the military budget, and the generals naturally tended to favour the kind of force with which they were familiar. They were far from realizing the extent to which the effectiveness of armies was dependent on adequate air cover.

The downfall of both armies may be tracked to a fatal degree of self-satisfaction at the top.

In the case of the French this had been fostered by their victory in the first World War and the way that their partners had always deferred to their assumption of superior military knowledge. In the case of the Poles it had been nourished by their defeat of the Russians in 1920.

Neglect Of British "Theories"

The military leaders in both cases had long shown themselves arrogantly complacent about their armies and military technique. It is only fair to say that some of the younger French soldiers, such as Colonel de Gaulle, showed a keen interest in the new ideas of tank warfare that were being preached in England. But the higher French generals paid little attention to these British-born "theories"—in marked contrast to the way the new school of German generals studied them.

As for the Polish military chiefs, it is grimly amusing to recall that when, in a book published two months before the war, I gently expressed doubt whether they were wise to put faith in cavalry charges against modern arms, the Polish Foreign Office was spurred to make an official protest to ours against such a reflection on their realism!

It is a mistake, however, to imagine that even the German Army was a really efficient and modernly designed force. Not only was it unready for war as a whole, as already shown, but the bulk of the active divisions were out of date in pattern, while the conceptions of the higher command still ran in old grooves.

But it had created a small number of new-type formations by the time war broke out—four armoured and four mechanized divisions, as well as four motorized infantry divisions to back them up. It was a small proportion of the total, but it counted for more than all the rest of the German Army—in the absence of any similar new-type force on the other side.

At the same time the German High Command had, rather hesitatingly, recognized the new theory of high-speed warfare, and was willing to give it a trial. That was due, above all, to the enthusiastic advocacy of General Guderian and a few others, and the way that their arguments appealed to Hitler—who, naturally, favoured any idea that promised a quick solution.

In sum, the German Army achieved its run of victories, not because it was overwhelming in strength or thoroughly modern in form, but because it was a few vital degrees more advanced than its opponents.

The campaign was brief.

The arena was in many ways ideal for a demonstration of the new blitzkrieg technique. Poland's frontiers were long and the interior flat, while the scarcity of good roads was off-set by the dryness of the weather. The

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THIS WEEK'S COVER

GILBERT WILKINSON, painted this week's cover. He is a Liverpool man, the son of a sailor and landscape artist. Although he is a noted cartoonist, as well as a serious painter, Wilkinson looks as little like an artist as possible. With a pipe in his mouth, a neat double-breasted suit and a discreet tie, he has been described as looking like a master mariner on shore leave. The idea for the cover came during a Broads trip on a racing dinghy. "I wanted to give an impression of the sly pleasure with which a full sail glides by a konked-out motor boat," he says.

Germans were able to start from an enveloping position, owing to their possession of East Prussia on Poland's northern flank and their occupation of Slovakia on her southern flank. The west of Poland was thus a huge salient projecting between Germany's jaws.

Pride, possessiveness and over-confidence prompted the Polish Command to mass the bulk of their forces far forward—in or near the western provinces, which had been taken from Germany after the first World War. This forward deployment exposed them to a quick encirclement.

At the same time the German air force wrecked the Polish railway system, thus making it impossible for the unmechanized Polish ground forces to shift their positions or withdraw, except by slow marches on foot.

Reichenau Follows "New Rules"

While the German flank thrusts helped to stretch and distract the Poles, the decisive stroke was delivered by Reichenau's Army, in the south centre, which had been allotted the greater part of the German armoured and mechanized groups. (Reichenau, though not a tankman, had long shown an enthusiastic interest in the new theory of tank strategy—he had himself translated several of my books, describing them as "setting new rules" for warfare.)

Penetrating a gap, one of Reichenau's armoured corps raced through to the outskirts of Warsaw, Poland's capital, on September 8. This deep thrust was quickly followed up and the Germans placed themselves astride the rear of the main Polish armies, which were cut off from their bases and supplies. Although the Poles struggled bravely they could not break out of the trap. Meantime other German mobile thrusts were spreading confusion, and paralysis. Then, on September 17, the armies of Soviet Russia crossed Poland's eastern frontier. That blow in the back sealed her fate, for there were scarcely any troops left to oppose this second invasion.

The campaign afterwards became merely a mopping up of stubborn Polish fragments, prior to the partition of Poland between Germany and Russia—as agreed in the secret treaty they had made.

Meantime the French had merely made a small dent in Germany's western front. It looked, and was, a feeble effort to relieve the pressure on their ally. In view of the weakness of the German forces and defences it is natural to feel that they could have done more. But, here again, deeper analysis tends to correct the obvious conclusion suggested by the comparative figures of the opposing forces.

Why France Couldn't Attack

Although the French northern frontier was five hundred miles long, in attempting an offensive the French were confined to the narrow ninety-mile sector from the Rhine to the Moselle—unless they violated the neutrality of Belgium and Luxembourg. The Germans were able to concentrate the best part of their available forces on this narrow sector, and they sowed the approaches to their Siegfried Line with a thick belt of minefields, thus imposing delay on the attackers.

Worse still, the French were unable to start their offensive until about September 17—except for some preliminary probing attacks. By that date, Poland was so obviously collapsing that they had a good excuse for countermanding it.

Their incapacity to strike earlier arose from their mobilization system, which was inherently out of date. It was the fatal product of their reliance on the conscript army—which could not come effectively into action until the mass of "trained reserves" had been called up from their civil jobs, and the formations had been made ready to operate.

But the delay was increased by the French Command's persistence in old tactical ideas—particularly their view that any offensive must be prepared by a massive artillery bombardment on the lines of the first World War.

They still regarded heavy artillery as the essential "tin-opener" in dealing with any defended position. But the bulk of their heavy artillery had to be brought out of storage, and could not be available until the last stage of mobilization, the sixteenth day. That condition governed their preparations to deliver an offensive.

For several years past one of France's political leaders, M. Reynaud, had constantly argued that the conceptions were out of date, and had urged the necessity of creating a fully-trained mechanized force of professional soldiers ready for instant action—instead of relying on the old and slow-mobilizing conscript mass. But he had been a voice crying in the wilderness.

The lesson of 1939 can be summed up in two sentences. In the east a hopelessly out-of-date army was quickly disintegrated by a small tank force, which put into practice a novel technique, while, in the west, a slow-motion army could not develop any effective

Continued on next page

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JOHNNY GOODBULLET, the *Bullets* bulldog, joined our office staff on January 1, 1949—you see him here as a pup, doing his first job of congratulating a winner. Johnny saw the *Bullets* party of eighteen readers off to Switzerland last week. This week he's toddling down to Eastbourne for his first look at the seaside and a chat with a reader enjoying a prize holiday there.

To celebrate his first birthday, Johnny is soon to travel to the home of the reader who captures the First Prize cheque in this week's offer of over £750. Our 80-lb. bulldog will take with him a £5 surprise gift weighing nearly as much as he does, also presents for two of the winner's neighbours.

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2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.

3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.

4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated Oct. 1 and in JOHN BULL dated Oct. 8, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams employees (and families) ineligible.

First winner to meet Johnny, the *Bullets* bulldog, was Mr. J. W. Winstanley, 20 Brocklebank Lane, Liverpool, 19. Who's next? See this week's offer.

2 BIG CHEQUES WON XWORD 644

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OTHER AWARDS: £10: W. Longbottom, 12 Anchor Terrace, Hunslet, Leeds, 10: MAKES US WONDER—WHAT'S "COOKING," DAD'S CIGAR! £10: R. Martin, 36 Kimberley Street, Pallion, Sunderland: MIGHT BE A CENTENARIAN—GRANDPA—IF *World* LASTS! £5: E. K. Beard, 11 Ferguson Road, Banbury: CHILDREN OF TOMORROW — BIGGER, STRONGER, HEALTHIER—*Delinquents*? £5: Mrs. M. Cahill Hart, Bramber, Homeland's Avenue, East Preston, Sussex: MAN I'M SORRY FOR—THE SON I SPOILT. £5: F. Jones, 40 Bristol Street, Malmesbury: SOMETHING COOKING AND—SOMEBODY HUMMING — EVERYTHING GRAND. £5: Mrs. H. Lacey, c/o 69 Sunnyside Road, Chesham: BRITAIN OF TOMORROW—IN *Your* DEBT, WORKERS? £5: E. G. Taylor, 91 East View, Wideopen, Newcastle-on-Tyne: WORK FOR BRITAIN—AND "SAVE YOUR SHARE"!

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Across Clues XWORD 649

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3. A lot of folk make a steady income out of these
5. May prove even taller than expected
8. Associated with certain historic occasions
11. Many fall off and disappoint
13. It's refreshing to meet such a person nowadays
14. Doting mother may well urge her boy to steer clear of all

Down Clues

1. There are many times you won't find one at junction of busy streets
2. Good wood should go into these
4. Some are relatively unproductive
6. Kiddy who is this may become a nuisance
7. Average child learns to do what he's told when he gets this
9. It's probably a good sign when a mental patient is given more
10. Even a short journey is trying when in this
12. Uninspired author may be all the better for

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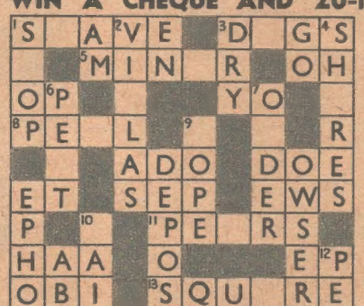

In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.), Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink, not pencil.

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THE GREAT ILLUSIONS OF 1939

Continued from previous page

pressure before it was too late. Dealing with our entry into the war—after describing how we allowed Germany to re-arm and then to swallow Austria and Czechoslovakia, while at the same time spurning Russia's proposals for joint action—Churchill says in his memoirs:

"And now, when every one of these aids and advantages has been squandered and thrown away, Great Britain advances, leading France by the hand, to guarantee the integrity of Poland—of that very Poland which with hyena appetite had only six months before joined in the pillage and destruction of the Czechoslovak State.

"There was sense in fighting for Czechoslovakia in 1938 when the German Army could scarcely put half a dozen trained divisions on the Western Front, when the French, with nearly sixty or seventy divisions, could most certainly have rolled forward across the Rhine or into the Ruhr. But this had been judged unreasonable, rash, below the level of modern intellectual thought and morality.

Churchill's Self-verdict?

"Yet now at last the two Western Democracies declared themselves ready to stake their lives upon the territorial integrity of Poland. History, which we are told is mainly the record of the crimes, follies and miseries of mankind, may be scoured and ransacked to find a parallel to this sudden and complete reversal of five or six years' policy of easy-going placatory appeasement, and its transformation almost overnight into a readiness to accept an obviously imminent war on far worse conditions and on the greatest scale. . . .

"Here was decision at last, taken at the worst possible moment and on the least satisfactory ground which must surely lead to the slaughter of tens of millions of people."

It is a striking verdict on our folly. Churchill himself had, in the heat of the moment, vigorously applauded Chamberlain's pressing offer of our guarantee to Poland. Why? He attempts no adequate explanation.

It is only too evident that in 1939 he, like most of Britain's leaders, acted on a hot-headed impulse, instead of with the cool-headed judgment that was formerly characteristic of British statesmanship.

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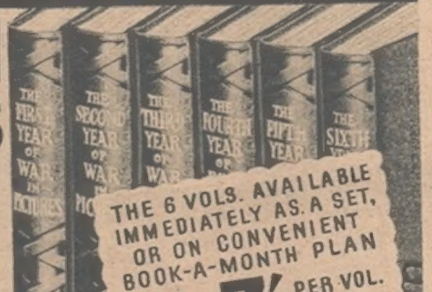

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